THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR

Vol. 11 Spring · 1942 No. 2

Editorial — *Alvin Johnson*
The Europe of Napoleon: A Synopsis — *Golo Mann*
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In the Workshop

Anthropology and Cultural Change — *Ruth Benedict*

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SPRING · 1942 VOLUME 11 · No. 2

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Indexed in the *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature*

THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR is published four times a year, December, March, June and October, by the United Chapters of Phi Beta Kappa. The annual subscription is $2 (foreign, $2.50). Publication office, Federal and Nineteenth Streets, Camden, New Jersey. Editorial office, 12 East 44 Street, New York, N. Y. Entered as second-class matter at the Post Office at Camden, New Jersey, under the act of March 3, 1879. Printed in the United States of America. Copyright 1942, by the United Chapters of Phi Beta Kappa. Volume 11, No. 2.

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Editorial

In Golo Mann's "The Europe of Napoleon," appearing in this issue there is a significant moral for our own time. For over twenty years Europe was helpless in the face of French aggression. Was this due to inadequacy of man power, inferiority in equipment, hopelessly bungling generalship? Immediately, yes; but what prevented the various coalitions against Napoleon from developing adequate resources was the incapacity of the rulers, the diplomats, even the intellectuals, schooled in the old order, to grasp the meaning of a revolutionary situation. They interpreted the motives and measured the resources of revolutionary France in terms of the old order that was perishing. In consequence they were always taken by surprise.

How far have our democratic societies been afflicted with similar rigidities of mind which lame them in their struggle with the revolutionary force of totalitarianism? Certainly we exhibited rigidity of ideas through the early period of Nazism. Here before our eyes was a ruthless revolutionary force extending its baleful influence in every direction. Instead of recognizing it for what it is we did our best to cram it into our traditional scheme of political ideas. Nazism was to us just a political party. Nazi economic policy was just an application of the familiar

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principle of planning. Nazi military ambitions, we assumed, were little more than conventional irredentism. And as Nazi ideas appeared to be practically the same as our own ideas, it seemed possible to arrange for a *modus vivendi* with Nazism.

The shock of war has cracked open the ideas of most of us. More and more frequently we think of world affairs as they are now, not as they were before 1914, or even as they were before 1933. Yet few of us can boast minds that are not in greater or less degree cluttered up with ideas that revolutionary totalitarianism has rendered obsolete.

One occasionally hears the criticism that THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR devotes too much of its space to issues bearing upon the world struggle. Has not the reader a right to at least one isle of peace in the sea of war ideas? Certainly: we cannot make a constant diet of grave problems. Even so active a man as Cicero had to retire to Tusculum and sink himself in ethical disputations when the problems of the time became too oppressive.

But neither a journal nor an individual scholar can afford to shirk the job of thinking about the challenge of totalitarianism. We did not understand it, at first, and we are paying for that. There are not many of us who understand it completely today. The totalitarians understand us. And so long as this condition obtains, the advantage lies with them.

ALVIN JOHNSON

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The Europe of Napoleon: A Synopsis

GOLO MANN

WHERE human fate is concerned there is hardly a question that does not admit of different or contradictory answers. An abyss separates our age from that of Napoleon and in this sense nothing useful may be learned from the latter. Yet there is a mechanism of power politics, even a mechanism of the human soul, that remains constant throughout the ages and in this sense the past elucidates the present. Vice versa, the present elucidates the past. Contemporary statesmen may very seldom have sufficient time to view the present in the light of past experience. Historians have time to view the past in the light of recent experience. That is why an episode like the Napoleonic crisis is studied anew by every generation, and always with different results.

In retrospect the conflicts that checkered the fourteen years of Napoleon's European adventure can be considered as one single war, interrupted by lulls and armistices, resumed by the Allies time and again in unsuccessful offensives. But if we look at the individual events of the period from the perspective of those who lived through it we are able to distinguish four separate phases. The first, covering the years 1801 to 1805, may be called the appeasement period; the second, 1805 to 1807, the period of continental resistance; the third, 1807 to 1812, the period of continental peace, collaboration, or, as the expression ran, of the New Federative System; the fourth, 1812 to 1814, the revolutionary period.

Albert Sorel, in the introduction to his *L'Europe et la Révolution Française*, gives a shrewd analysis of the character of the great wars against the French Revolution:

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The French Revolution, from its beginning, and as a direct consequence of its basic principles, undermined the foundation and ruined the whole structure of ancient Europe. . . . The strangest factor in this picture is neither the character of the new doctrine nor the ardor with which it was propagated; it is the indifference of the other European governments. They had not noticed the first signs of the storm and when it finally broke they witnessed it with egoistic tranquillity; it was only after the inundation had flooded their own countries that they began to understand what a serious thing was going on. They had not recognized the danger nor were they able to cope with it. Incoherent efforts, contradictory maneuvers, plans that were wrecked again and again—this was all they had to offer in opposition.

The great historian's judgment seems to contradict popular tradition, according to which the war began with an arbitrary aggression by Europe's kings against the cause of liberty. But it does not contradict the opinions of witnesses of the time—not, that is, if we take the word of those who were really competent and ignore the poets and doctrinaires. In 1805 Frederick Gentz thus characterized the attitude of the European Powers:

To escape the common danger in every imaginable way, once participation could not be refused; to restrict it to the poorest, most ineffective measures; and as soon as an exit was offered to quit the scene on any condition—this comprised the substance of all political wisdom. We have seen the egoistical Allies converted, in the very midst of the common disaster, into real foes by the hope of grasping an elusive prey before the flames should reach their own house.

Similar accusations, exhortations to a radical change in tactics, can be found as early as 1793 in the writings of moderate French royalists. The war against the French Revolution was launched too late in the day to save the *ancien régime* either in France or in the rest of Europe; once undertaken, the defense of the old order proved as inadequate as it was belated.

There were manifold reasons for this failure. Some of them hold good for the whole period, 1789 to 1814, and others for its early years only.

During the first phase there was complete blindness as to what the Revolution meant or could mean. It was understood

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neither in its national nor in its international implications. To European intellectuals it was a moral spectacle, beautiful or dreadful in its absolute meaning but without immediate consequences in terms of their own destiny. To European diplomats it was an event much more disagreeable for the King of France than for his royal brothers, because a revolution spelled the political and military decadence of the country in which it took place. Their mistake in judgment led de Tocqueville to remark:

> It is a common error of the people who are called wise and practical in ordinary times to judge by fixed standards those men whose very object it is to change or to destroy those standards. But when passion usurps the guidance of affairs, the beliefs of men of experience are less worthy of consideration than the schemes that engage the imagination of dreamers.

That early period was also marked by a vague expectation of tremendous, unavoidable historical changes in the near future; by a contempt, shared by members of the ruling caste even, for everything associated with foreign policy; by a secret hope that the period of great wars was over; by a philosophical pacifism, in vogue throughout Europe but especially strong in Northern Germany.

Still other influences operated to make defense of the *ancien régime* ineffectual. There was sympathy for the Revolution, which had been quickly identified with the great transformation the intellectual élite had hoped for; and this sympathy tended to give vigor to the formal principle of non-intervention, which declared the sovereignty of a state inviolate, with domestic and foreign affairs regarded as strictly separated fields.

But the factor that did most to paralyze the anti-French forces—and this during the entire period—was the character of the training their leaders had had. These men had been educated in the tradition of other issues and conflicts: for example, the inveterate continental hatred of England's commercial policy, a fear of Russia's recently developed power and ambitions, the hostility between Prussia and Austria. Each government cherished its own private aims, greeds and apprehensions, in

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the face of which sentiment on behalf of a common cause grew very slowly, even under the impact of monstrous experiences.

The ignorance that delayed the resort to arms was matched by the conduct of the war waged upon revolutionary France. A penetrating observer, Mallet Du Pan, could say in 1794:

> They [the Allies] do not want, nor are they able, to understand that this is a *revolutionary* war which must be waged in a revolutionary way with weapons adapted to the genius and the means of their enemy.

In the preceding year the same publicist had written:

> The greatest number of those who have passed 50 or 60 years of age cannot but view the revolution from the perspective of antiquated habits. . . . With their eyes fixed upon the fortifications of a frontier town they tie their destiny with a confident simplicity to a spot on the map: the gulf widens and these observers see the last fortress still standing in defense of the remains of civil society totter to its base.

When, however, the enemies of the Revolution finally awoke to a realization of the superiority of the military forces it had mobilized they did not redouble their own efforts. The realization led, instead, to the first of the peace treaties with the Republic.

The treaty was signed, in 1795, between France and Prussia. Many different motives led to its conclusion: reasons of power politics, of economy, the particular kind of philosophical thought then current. In addition, however, we find the Prussian ministers presenting to their king an argument that may be summed up as follows: We are told that to escape the Revolution we must wage war against the revolutionary Power. The contrary is true. A war against the Revolution would be the surest way to attract it to our own country. For, inasmuch as it has now been proven that the Revolution furnishes France with hitherto unimagined economic, military and moral resources, it is clear that we cannot fight France without the sansculottization of our own army and government. A war would offer the French all desired pretexts and occasions for employing their propaganda machine against us and for undermining the morale of our population; whereas we might hope, if we

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arrived at a diplomatic understanding with them, not only to escape the dangerous impact of revolutionary France but even to exert a moderating influence on its system of government.

For ten years Prussia shaped her course to this policy. Her statesmen, conscious of a glorious but somewhat obsolete military tradition, secretly haunted by doubt as to the real might of their nation, never for a moment forgot the fate of the French aristocracy. Their hesitations, their lack of self-assurance sprang from fear of a like destiny. Furthermore they had been taught by popular philosophers that war, as a barbaric form of human coexistence, must be avoided at any price; that theirs was an age of reason; and that inner reform constituted the best foreign policy. But the social reforms paralyzed Prussia's foreign policy and were themselves crippled by fear of war.

The final dissolution of the first anti-French coalition, however, was inspired by few if any philosophical considerations. In their dealings with the French the Prussian ambassadors had adopted, though not without irony, the idealistic language of the former—world peace, justice, reason, no conquests. But when, two years later, General Bonaparte met with the representatives of Austria he talked in the familiar terms of power politics to which the Austrian plenipotentiaries were accustomed. Out of the conferences came a treaty in the old style—revolutionary only in the sense that it pushed the "*système copartageant*," the principle of concluding peace at the expense of the weakest neutrals, further than the most rapacious king of Prussia would have dreamt possible.

The first coalition disappeared in a peace that was merely an armistice. After eighteen months, spent in peaceful conquests by the French and in futile pleas and the publication of confused tracts by the conservative Powers, the world war began anew, automatically and with no formal declaration. Russia now joined England, Austria, Naples, Portugal, Turkey. And again a tremendous agglomeration of states was overwhelmed "by a handful of bandits," to quote the Austrian leader, Thugut, "who have already too often taught the amazed world the

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priceless advantages deriving from a single planning agency and a ruthless determination in thought and action." The republican government of France prosecuted the first phase of the war; the dictator, or First Consul, Bonaparte, concluded the peace—supposed to be a lasting one. For at least three years the continental Powers not only hoped for peace but earnestly tried to appease the new French ruler.

This peace policy was dictated by several considerations. The Allies had come to realize the military superiority of the French. They had had bitter experience with the French Army; and this direct knowledge had been supplemented by numerous theoretical studies—books on revolutionary warfare, strategy, propaganda, which have a modern counterpart. On the other hand they clung to the belief, or the fallacious hope, that Bonaparte was somebody with whom one could deal. There was nothing of genuine sympathy for him or for his system in this belief; on the contrary, there was hardly a government in Europe that would not have preferred a downright restoration of the old dynasty. Bonaparte, however, was there, he was very strong, he had a reputation for being a prudent politician, at least he seemed preferable to a new outburst of Jacobinism. Characteristically, when a new, strong, opportunistic government, a government not tied to a particular class or party and therefore free to dally with all and to change its course to suit the exigencies of each occasion, a government having only one aim—to maintain itself in power—appears on the international scene, the most disparate parties believe themselves entitled to claim it as their own. Europe's leftist intellectuals adored Bonaparte; conservative rulers hoped to attract him into their own camp. The instructions handed to a new Austrian ambassador to Berlin, Count Metternich, read in part:

> The crucial question is, therefore, whether Bonaparte is really the insatiable world conqueror England and her friends would like to make us believe, or whether this shrewd statesman could not be persuaded to adopt a more moderate policy. The domestic pressure exerted upon him, added to the incredible lack of resistance he has met

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from the princes of Europe, has until now determined his violent operations. Would it not be in the interest of the First Consul to make an end to this fatal course? In that case he should be assured that we are ready to take into account the particular situation of his government, and that we should be far from asking any striking concession or steps which could do harm to his personal position.

It goes without saying that in this peace effort the arguments habitually advanced by isolationists played their part. In 1804 Gentz, then an adviser to the Austrian foreign minister, Cobenzl, attributed an amazing piece of wisdom to his chief:

> Let us close our eyes and ears to everything going on in the outside world! Away with all this talk about foreign influence and balance of power and resistance to a force which is now too firmly established and against which there are no measures left to be taken. And why should they be? Let Europe help herself as she can; what are our obligations toward Europe? Let us stay at home, let us mind our own business, and nobody will disturb our peace.

Gentz adds:

> Such an excess of weakness and blindness indeed passes all imagination! These are things posterity will refuse to believe; and even we, who are condemned to witness this spectacle of shame and misery, sometimes ask ourselves whether it is really true or whether all this is not a dream.

When an individual is on bad terms with the majority of his neighbors the source of the trouble must be within himself. By his character and deeds he provokes reactions which drive him to, or give him the pretext for, other actions that make things worse and worse; a vicious circle takes shape. If we arbitrarily select a certain point on this circle we can easily demonstrate the guilt of the other parties, the neighbors, but not if we consider the circle as a whole. The same holds true for relations between states. The treaties of 1801-02 had confirmed France in possession of territories or zones of influence to which neither England nor the remaining continental Powers could in the long run resign themselves. The natural consequence was a reciprocal and universal distrust which in turn led to allegedly

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defensive precautions on the part of Napoleon—the taking of new steps in those regions given him by the peace treaties.

A new outbreak of hostilities between England and France was inevitable. Unable to attack England on the high seas, Napoleon was forced to strengthen his positions against England's potential allies on the Continent. In doing so he provoked the coalition he had set out to prevent. During the period 1802 to 1805 (one year of universal and three years of continental peace) he refused to evacuate Holland and Naples; annexed Piedmont; invaded Switzerland and arbitrated her internal dissensions; invaded a German state in order to seize a French émigré living there; occupied another German state formally belonging to the King of Great Britain; and founded a North Italian kingdom for himself. These acts he justified on the ground that they represented the common interest of Europe—defense against British arrogance; that they occurred in countries of no concern to Russia, Austria and Prussia; or that they were purely defensive. Historians have said they were dictated by fear (a thesis developed in Ferrero's recent books, *The Gamble* and *The Reconstruction of Europe*). But instead of fear the appeasement policy adopted by the great nations of the Continent provoked its opposites, contempt and presumption, in Napoleon. If those Powers were in any way responsible for the war of 1805, the most fateful of the Napoleonic wars, they may be blamed for the weakness and ineptitude with which they had allowed Napoleon to do things against which there was ultimately no other recourse but war. "Napoleon," the Prussian diplomat Lucchesini remarked in 1805, "is exploiting Europe's desire for peace and rest." The annexation of the Ligurian (Genoese) Republic finally filled the cup to overflowing. Fournier, in his *Gentz and Cobenzl*, quotes the Austrian foreign minister, Cobenzl, as writing to his sovereign:

> Recent events in Italy demonstrate only too clearly that Emperor Napoleon is indeed governed by an insatiable lust for world domination. . . . No longer can we hide from ourselves the mortal danger with which the Austrian Monarchy is now threatened.

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But the third coalition (England, Austria, Russia) ended like its predecessors—not after years, but after a few months.

Prussia, still believing in perpetual peace, remained neutral and waited until her natural allies were beaten; eight months later she precipitated herself into a desperate struggle against France. In naive and pathetic language the Prussian war manifesto of 1806 reviewed the whole story of the abortive appeasement policy. It enumerated the crimes committed by France and dwelt upon Prussia's unlimited patience.

> The policy of France has been for fifteen years the scourge of humanity. . . . It is painful to declare that there has been no change even under the new ruler. . . . It would be superfluous to enumerate everything that Napoleon owes to Prussia. . . . The peculiar contest has taken this course: On the one side moderation, forgiveness, probity, faithful adherence to the given pledge; on the other side abuse of force, a cynical assumption, based on past good luck, that success will attend any and every enterprise, and the habit of relying exclusively upon opportunism. . . . A conflict between a policy desiring all it can possibly get and a probity trusting in obligations and in particular in promises will be at all times an unequal contest. The moment had come when the King, out of his own experience, had had to realize the nature of the contest. It had been the most painful moment in his reign. . . . The Emperor Napoleon had informed His Majesty it had pleased him to dissolve the German Reich and to establish a Confederation of the Rhine; he had suggested to the King that he set up a similar confederation in the north. This had been Napoleon's usual device—crowned by longstanding success—namely, to offer a kind of bait, at the moment of the birth of a new project, to those courts which might place obstacles in the path of that project.

And yet the King of Prussia finally began the war and the Emperor of the French implored him for humanity's sake not to resort to this most murderous of human follies. The Napoleonic wars were never started by Napoleon.

Obviously only the appeasers could call a halt to the appeasement policy. By his exploitation of every preceding peace treaty, by the very character of his regime, Napoleon was aggressive in peace time. He had no interest in declarations of war and most sincerely did not want war. Gentz commented in 1806:

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Those who began the general destruction [the French] had without much genius found out that there was nothing more desirable for them than to go on with their work, irresistibly proceeding under the veil of a faithless sham peace. This was war of the most disastrous kind, because it raged on the one side without resistance from the other. If the French could push forward in this manner they could reach a point at which a single decisive blow would smash the last frail palisades still separating them from world domination. This system, the most assured and the most comfortable, they preferred to a declared and real war whose outcome always remained in doubt. . . . For this reason they did not want war; for the same reason others were forced to want it.

Once these conservative statesmen had decided to resort to war they flattered themselves upon having wrested the initiative from Napoleon. Would he not withdraw, seeing himself suddenly confronted with a serious resistance to which he was unaccustomed? Or if he accepted war would the odds not be on the side of those who had begun it? But Napoleon was only too ready. He may not have wanted war, formally or consciously; but he wanted it in the way we are bound to want to exercise a skill in which we feel superior to our competitors and upon which our whole economy of life is built. The bare fact of his immense military superiority was tantamount to a perpetual aggression. Undeniably, however, he had implored his enemies to keep the peace; he had warned them; and after his victorious campaign he was again right and his enemies wrong. He annexed new provinces and things were worse than ever.

Organized resistance on the Continent ended in 1807 with the Treaty of Tilsit. By the terms of this pact, drawn up between Napoleon and the Tsar, Prussia was partitioned, a "new order" was set up in Germany, Napoleon's brothers were recognized as Kings of Holland, Westphalia, Naples and presently of Spain. But from the moment the New Federative System was definitely established it began to crumble—in reality it was never established at all. It was a magnificent form given to a mass of contradictions, a gilded improvization, crude, accidental and irrational. A few months after the signing of the Treaty of Tilsit the Spanish rebellion broke out. In 1809 the

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Spaniards were joined by the Austrians. And yet, although for a time Napoleon was victorious in his campaign against the Spanish and Austrians, nevertheless it was in these campaigns that the seeds of revolutionary (and, from 1812 to 1814, decisive) changes in the attitudes and techniques of Napoleon's enemies—his pseudo-allies—began to germinate. Finally, just when Austria seemed firmly bound to the New Federative System, Russia embarked on an independent course. Collaboration with Napoleon was a hybrid product, the collaborators embracing protected states (like Switzerland, the Confederation of the Rhine, the Grand Duchy of Warsaw), vassal states (for example the Italian States, Holland until her annexation, Spain) governed by members of the Bonaparte family, and those formally independent states allied with Napoleon. After her defeat in 1806 Prussia became to all intents and purposes a protected state, as did Austria after 1809. The Tsar alone remained an ally in his own right—and therefore a potential enemy, for in Napoleon's system there was no place for independent allies. When the pact dividing the Continent between France and Russia was concluded, shrewd observers foresaw the inevitable outcome. Gentz commented in a letter written in 1807:

> It goes without saying that this *societas leonina*, this unnatural, abject duumvirate will end like former attempts of this kind. Octavian shares the world with Antony only to dominate it alone after a battle of Actium—which is perhaps not so far off. The Emperor of Russia will be punished! But *we* meanwhile! . . . This barbaric fight over the question whether the world shall belong to one or to two tyrants—this is the last act in the 18-year-old tragedy played for the sake of *universal freedom*!

The administration of the subjugated countries was prevailingly French where French-speaking rulers were imposed by Napoleon; prevailingly indigenous where the old dynasties were preserved. While they were completely bound to Napoleon's foreign, military and commercial policy, his vassals were free to deal with their own subjects as they pleased; they adopted French forms of administration because they seemed

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efficient and timely. Nor were the German and Italian populations at first very unhappy under these new forms. Napoleon was eager not to antagonize national sentiment if without great cost he could avoid doing so. German intellectuals were still more eager not to hurt Napoleon; many brains were overstrained and much printer's ink was wasted in an effort to prove the new order natural, unavoidable and beneficial and its founder godlike. But there was one—and it proved decisive—factor that gradually poisoned the New Federative System and roused the German and Italian peoples to enmity toward the Emperor: the economic misery caused by the continental blockade. The war against England had led Napoleon to found the New Federative System; the war against England forced him to institute the continental blockade; the continental blockade ruined the New Federative System.

Collaboration and imitation, born of defeat and subjection, in one sense prepared the ground for deliverance. Statesmen had understood, ever since the military disasters of the early nineties, that the French Revolution had mobilized forces theretofore unimagined. These forces were not invincible but they could not even be matched by the old methods of warfare employed by absolutist states. Appeasement represented an attempt to avoid the efforts and convulsions attendant on an adaptation to the new element in Europe. Once appeasement had proved futile, there remained nothing but complete capitulation or an attempt to fight the enemy with his own weapons. The reforms that Stein introduced in Prussia were instigated by this realization. Consciously he and his government undertook the sans-culottization from which Prussian statesmen had refrained ten years earlier. Surrender to an international necessity must not in this case be equated with a renunciation of national tradition and individuality; Stein was not a Bonapartist merely because he began to organize that democratic mass-army which was needed to beat the democratic mass-army of the French.

The gradual adoption of revolutionary methods by Napoleon's adversaries made the change in Napoleon's own position

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the more striking. France ceased to be a revolutionary Power. This transformation is attributable not so much to the temperament of the dictator as to the laws inherent in all imperialism and wars of conquest. The Jacobins had been unable to tolerate really independent republics as neighbors; Napoleon could not tolerate strong governments, popular armies or flourishing industries outside the borders of France. Consequently he began to connive with the reactionary caste in the occupied countries and the Revolution turned against him.

Since there was no historical analogy to enlighten them, those living in the midst of the turmoil were utterly mystified by the puzzle they were watching. They could not see that Napoleon was impelled to continued aggression and expansion by his powerlessness on the high seas. They could not see that the New Federative System, allegedly a product of the Emperor's planning and an organic necessity, was merely incidental to the inevitable clash between England and a France dominating the European Continent. They did not know the future, they wanted so to proceed that in the end they would have made the right choice, whatever shape the future might assume. Even Stein, a born leader of men, in his darkest moments feared that the Napoleonic Empire might last for several hundred years; those gifted with less imagination took it almost for granted. Almost—but not quite. And the fact that in the darkness they had discerned, though only dimly, another course became the armor whereby they saved their honor. Secretly they had always prayed for an English victory.

Actually, almost every continental Power had been, during this twenty-year crisis, more or less, time and again, at war with England: Spain in 1804, Prussia in 1806, Germany ever since the creation of the Confederation of the Rhine, Russia in 1808. If their declarations of war lacked deadly earnestness and could do England no serious harm, they were certainly no contribution to the "common cause." But had there been a common cause there would have been no Napoleonic Empire; once there was recognition of such a common cause, taking precedence

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over all other considerations, the Napoleonic Empire went to pieces within a few months. Before 1813, however, only the intellectual *avantgarde* understood that England, while fighting England's war, was also fighting for the liberty of the nations of Europe.

The very existence of the British Empire depended upon the survival of free nations on the Continent, whereas the existence of the Napoleonic Empire was incompatible with their independence. This basic contradiction was obscured, however, by superficial factors. Although Napoleon overthrew so many old dynasties and suppressed so many ancient states, he nevertheless seemed ambitious to become a member of the family of kings, to enter their order. It was an ambition that presupposed the conservation of their order and as such could not fail to be a source of constantly renewed endeavors at appeasement. Moreover England, in her treatment of the rights of neutrals, was hardly less ruthless than the Emperor. The bombardment of peaceful Copenhagen, the rape of the Danish fleet or the Dutch Colonies had at first glance not much to do with the fight for man's freedom. Because of such acts, Napoleon's propagandists were free to point out how greatly it was to the interest of Europe to unite against England's tyranny on the seas. France was Europe; to hope for an English victory was not merely anti-French—it was "anti-European." The coalitions against France were interpreted as forged by the British solely to serve Britain's self-seeking interest—everybody knew, for example, what strange help Austria or Russia had obtained from England once they had taken up arms in a cause in which England alone was interested. Russia looped the loop in 1807 partly because she felt she had been cheated and deserted by the English. Her disappointment was expressed in the words, perhaps legendary, with which Tsar Alexander greeted Napoleon when the two met for the first time: "I hate the English as much as you do." "In that case peace is established," Napoleon answered.

Fortunately the British statesmen knew how to overcome their contempt and to manage the continental Powers whose aid

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they were sooner or later bound to need. The dubious position in which the enforced partners to Napoleon's system found themselves led them to equivocal and dishonest practices. Although he shrank from a complete severance of his relations with Britain, the Tsar took advantage of the New Federative System to conquer Finland and Bessarabia. Similarly Metternich, the Austrian, whispered promising words in the ears of his British ex-allies on the very day of the wedding between Napoleon and an Austrian princess. Napoleon's reluctant partners excused whatever they did by pointing to the frightful pressure under which they undeniably existed. They also made a virtue of necessity and drew all possible profit from their collaboration with the enemy, plundering small neutrals, even plundering one another. What they were "really" intending and planning they did not know. Time had to decide for them.

When Tsar Alexander in the summer of 1812 exhorted the Germans to revolt against Napoleon, an Austrian diplomat had commented:

> It really takes a rare degree of insolence to invite one's neighbor to a common fight after having deserted, cheated, sold out and plundered this very neighbor for so many years; or to tell us that a war which the Tsar himself presents as purely defensive and which he begins with a retreat beyond the Dnieper has the liberation of Germany as its principal aim!

But the urgencies of the moment carried more weight than the sins of the past or any moralistic reflection. Russia, at war with Napoleon, fell into a *de facto* alliance with England, to be signed later on in due form. When, five months afterward, Napoleon's expeditionary force was broken and Russia decided to pursue her victory beyond her own frontiers, North Germany fell into a *de facto* alliance with Russia, and Austria could not long avoid being drawn down the stream. During this crisis the English diplomats were extremely energetic, the Austrian extremely astute. Those most intimately acquainted with their activities, however, felt there was something automatic about the formation of the great alliance. For the first time since

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the outbreak of the Revolution, France was faced with an alliance of all the European Powers and with such a mobilization of social forces as she herself had mustered in 1793. Napoleon could not hold out for even three months against assault from this combination of Powers.

At that critical moment the statesmen of Europe once again played with the idea of appeasement—but now an appeasement calculated to bring a halt not to Napoleon's rising but to his declining course, an attempt to save what remained of his position. For three months the leaders of Europe had recognized and treated the Napoleonic problem as the one paramount political issue; they now remembered other conflicts. There was danger of a Russian hegemony, of a nationalistic movement in Germany, of a social revolution in France.

The task, however, of sloughing off the burdens of the Napoleonic Empire while preserving its social assets proved too difficult for even the accomplished diplomats of the day. At this juncture the dissensions, inherent in any coalition, that had made Napoleon's adventure possible, merely prolonged his agony. Words and treaties could control the mechanism of his downfall as little as words and treaties could have ordered the mechanism of his conquests. Indeed it was the same mechanism, now running in reverse. If Napoleon could be forced to disgorge Germany and Italy he could be compelled to relinquish all other territory, the fruits of his own campaigns and those of revolutionary France alike.

To subdue England, Napoleon had been driven to form his New Federative System. To rid themselves of the New Federative System, the European Powers had finally been driven to form the great alliance of 1813. Neither the Napoleonic nor the anti-Napoleonic unity of Europe survived the occasion to which they owed their existence. Despite treaties, sermonizings, Christian compacts, after seven years nothing remained of the great coalition. States, social classes, intellectual movements, bound together for a single moment by an unbearable common suffering, reaffirmed their individuality.

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American Folk Drama Comes of Age

WILLIAM PEERY

THE commonplace that our early writers, in an attempt to equal, copied the literature of the Old World is nowhere more apparent than in the drama. Until comparatively recent times our playwrights, if they treated American themes, treated them superficially or sentimentally. By 1900 the influence of the native realistic novelists like Howells had, it is true, been felt in the drama. James A. Herne had written *Shore Acres* and *Sag Harbor* which put homely people close to the American soil. Augustus Thomas had captured some of the color and strength of Alabama, Missouri and Kentucky; William Vaughn Moody in *The Great Divide* had treated human passion in a native atmosphere with stern reality. Yet the theater in this country twenty-one years ago showed little promise of becoming truly American. Our position was comparable to that of Ireland in an earlier period; what we needed was a movement like that of the Abbey Theater.

When Theodore Roosevelt was finishing his first term as President a youth by the name of Frederick H. Koch, fresh from the Harvard of George P. Baker, had the vision, energy and single-minded purpose of one who might be able to inspire such a movement. Soon after he received an appointment to teach English at the University of North Dakota he was taking students on barn-storming tours of that State, presenting *The Rivals* and *She Stoops to Conquer* in hamlets uninitiated to the drama. In 1914 Koch produced *A Pageant of the Northwest*, with dialogue, poetry and music written by eighteen amateur playmakers. Koch thought of it as a folk drama: it was of communal authorship; it employed the dramatic activities of folk-

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singing, dancing and pantomime; and it dealt with the life of an unsophisticated people. At the same time Koch experimented in the one-act form with the comparatively new genre of regional drama. Presently his students were recording in dramatic form tales of the Dakota prairie, brought to life on a portable stage before the people who first made and loved them—"simple plays," Koch says, "sometimes crude, but always near to the good, strong, wind-swept soil, plays of the travail and the achievement of a pioneer people." These short plays were doubtless more appealing than *A Pageant of the Northwest*; and a student of the drama can trace Koch's gradually changing conception of folk drama from the pageant of communal authorship to the play of single authorship written by his students today, communal only insofar as other students have been given opportunity to criticize it.

In 1918 Koch put in his pocket the manuscript of a pageant he had written and went to the University of North Carolina to stress the writing of one-act plays of the people like those which his theory, now tested and approved, had produced in North Dakota. To a group of girls and a savage-looking boy named Thomas Wolfe, a giant but too young to be at war, Koch explained:

> If you observe the locality with which you are most familiar, and interpret it faithfully, it will show you the way to the universal. It has been so in all lasting art. If you can see the interestingness of the lives of those about you with understanding and imagination, with wonder, who can say but that you may be able to interpret that life in significant images for others, perhaps for all?

Young Wolfe went home to his desk and wrote *The Return of Buck Gavin*, his first published work. Moreover, throughout the years in which he was producing his massive autobiographical novels, he apparently never forgot Koch's teaching.

North Carolina has made an excellent laboratory for Koch's students. It sweeps 500 miles from the Great Smoky Mountains to Roanoke Island. Manteo, on Roanoke Island, has become a boom town since a local historical commission and the Carolina

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Playmakers have been producing there every summer Paul Green's drama of the birthplace of America, *The Lost Colony*. In mountain coves and among coastal inlets Koch found many an isolated community where antiquity was not forgotten, where old wives believed that cows in the stable drop to their knees on Christmas Eve in homage to Christ, where Old Christmas is still celebrated in January. And in towns and more accessible country the new life of cotton-mill workers and tobacco hands offered another though a different primitivism—an elemental people wresting their living from forces as baffling as the sea and sky.

When the War was over, more men joined Koch, Wolfe and the women around the long, black walnut table in the upper northeast room of the old library. Plays in abundance were written, rehearsed, staged and produced at the University whose founders had provided that no dramatic entertainment might be given within five miles of its campus. The enthusiasm of the young Carolina Playmakers spread beyond the University into the village and State. Here was a pedagogy more significant than the imposition of examination hurdles, a learning more vital than the acquisition of ill-digested facts. In each student was nurtured the creative spark, the artistic potentiality, with which Koch believes every man as a human being is endowed. The future of this way of teaching seemed boundless. Young Paul Green, philosophy student who had returned troubled from France, in class one day looked up at Koch in wonder. "Where," he asked, "is all this going to lead us, anyhow." Koch replied, "I can't tell you, Paul; but I believe we're on the way to something."

That way led to the founding of the Playmakers Theater, the first state-owned theater in America dedicated to the making of its own native drama. It led to 38 tours of the State, region and nation with the homemade plays. It led to the publication of five collections of Carolina folk plays and two volumes of plays by single authors. It led to the organization of the Carolina Dramatic Association, to whose annual dramatic festival come hundreds of authors, directors, actors and other theater

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workers from school, college and civic theaters. In the past twenty years the Playmakers have seen their kind of drama take root throughout America until today plays of the American people are common on Broadway, until the influence of their art has been felt in recent non-dramatic regional literature. In 1940 the Playmakers celebrated their coming of age in a nation-wide homecoming for leaders in folk drama. This new, creative American scholarship—a humanism in the basic meaning of the term—has come of age.

Beginning before the turn of the century, Irish playwrights wrote, on a platform very similar to that later adopted by the Carolina Playmakers and other folk writers, some remarkable works of which a few are counted among the finest plays in our language. They sang their Irish songs, recorded the Irish speech and the Irish folklore; and then, having ridden their wave to its crest, they were lost in the breaking surge. Although Paul Vincent Carroll's *The White Steed* not long ago won the New York Drama League's Foreign Award, Ireland has now largely lost the creative power of the Abbey Theater pioneers. The company's last tour of the United States afforded examples of skilled performance but few American dramatists today write under the Irish influence.

Does such loss of the original creative *élan* necessarily lie ahead of all groups with a similar aim? Certain evidence points to that conclusion, for, once having finished their task, the Irish writers were no longer bound together by the challenge that called their group into being. Had they found a new compelling goal they might have retained their power.

But let us look more closely into the purpose of folk playwrights, Irish or American. Even in their fine days of youthful consecration these movements had severe weaknesses. We may pass over one of their assumptions: that the new is better than the old. Some very satisfactory plays, such as *Agamemnon*, *Oedipus Rex* and *Hamlet*, are made from materials which were pretty old stuff before the right dramatist got hold of them.

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Apart from this consideration four major flaws mar the critical theory of folk playwrights everywhere.

These playwrights attempt, in the first place, to preserve the past—not as history but as a living anachronism. Folk drama has been too largely an escapist drama. Koch himself may discourage escapism. "Write what you know," he has preached in more than a dozen leading universities. But his student of the present generation no longer knows what Koch calls folk materials. He no longer comes from the world portrayed in any of the five volumes of Carolina folk plays. He is a product of the consolidated school, a son of the radio and cinema. He invites Earl Browder, and would probably like to invite Stalin, to address him on matters more serious than country preachers leaning too heavily on their jugs of corn liquor or still operators "het up to git them revenooers." It is reported that when Green wrote his first drama he had never seen a play produced. The present crop of student authors has been acting in plays since childhood. The Playmakers and other groups cannot repeatedly take their theater, as they have regularly done in their tours, into isolated hamlets and expect those hamlets to remain dramatically inexperienced. North Carolina has been drama-conscious for over ten years—at the expense of the naive wonder that made the early Carolina folk plays so effective. Recent student authors do not know and are not a part of the life with which folk plays are expected to deal. They will have to treat problems typical of today or lose that creative power derived from native materials which largely accounts for the success of folk movements in the past.

Native drama as practiced by Lady Gregory and the Playmakers has, secondly, encouraged writing down to the natives. Green is unquestionably one of the folk. But unless we admit that consolidated schools and first-rate universities are of no effect whatever we must conclude that present-day interest in folk speech and character is too often the interest of a writer in search of something to write about. Even the most successful Playmaker authors of recent years, writers like Bernice Kelly Harris

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and Josephina Niggli, reveal themselves aware of their superiority to their humble native characters. They do not necessarily say but frequently imply, "Now isn't that quaint?" Important drama will hardly be written from a royal box in the theater of American life.

Like other arts, drama, in the third place, is at its best a happy marriage of form with content. The writer of folk plays can hardly be expected to maintain the delicate balance between manner and matter. Subscribing to a creed which emphasizes content, he either "creates fresh dramatic forms" as Koch says or is careless of form altogether. Many early folk plays, though published and rather widely produced, have never yet had to show that they are plays in the best sense. They were sometimes written in a fine language, to be sure, but not necessarily in the language of the theater. Through their strange beautiful dialect, their eccentricity of character, their antiquarianism and the earnestness with which they were acted they appealed strongly to audiences weary of superficial drama—without ever having to meet high standards of dramatic effectiveness.

Now, however, there remain few audiences uninitiated into the starkness and primitive beauty of the folk world. Since Harold Williamson wrote *Peggy*, the literary ancestor of *Tobacco Road*, American audiences have seen many a tragedy of the tenant farmer whose creator has seemed less interested in analyzing his problem than in exploiting his eccentricities. We have seen many a comedy of mountain life whose type characters punctuate their remarks by spitting tobacco juice. Shorn of his novelty, the folk character is no longer so interesting as he once was. The young author may no longer use him as a crutch for the support of a play lacking structural backbone.

When asked how he wrote a play Green once replied, "I haven't any dramatic technique. I merely tell the story, episode by episode. It seems to me absurd to try to force a story into a definite mold demanding three well-divided scenes, with a climax for each curtain and a cut-and-dried dénouement." This iconoclasm, much of which may have been wholesome, has

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made Green second only to O'Neill as an innovator in American drama; but it also accounts for a certain looseness of structure, with a consequent weakening of dramatic impact, that critics have objected to in more than one of Mr. Green's major works. In return for the freshness and sincerity which he gave Hollywood, however, Green learned from Hollywood the technique of the motion picture; and though he is still a forceful advocate of the liberated stage, he has learned better how to tell a story in terms of the existing stage.

Surely the application of dramatic technique would have helped Thomas Wolfe tie up and deliver the contents of *Look Homeward, Angel*, to solidify the mass which is *Of Time and the River*. Introduced to technique by Professor Baker, Wolfe found it irksome. He apparently never outgrew the youthful folk theory he expressed while an undergraduate, in the foreword to his first play: "The dramatic is not in the unusual. It is happening daily in our lives. Some of us, perhaps, toil on a mountain farm; and when we relax, it is to think bitterly on the unvaried monotonous grind of our existence. Here is drama in the true sense." This is one point of view. From another, drama may be said to spring from the revelatory overflow of character in a crisis. Wolfe would have had one omit the obligatory scenes, the crises in which such characters yield to or triumph over their environment. His attitude fairly represents the confusion of life with art that has been characteristic of folk writers. At Chapel Hill and elsewhere the stock rebuttal of any criticism of motivation or authenticity generally is, "But I used to know that woman. She did do just what I say!"

Writers of the folk play have not only sacrificed form for a new content. They have, in the fourth place, failed to put a proper evaluation on the new content. No one denies the value of introducing fresh, invigorating materials into the national drama but when that introduction involves a preoccupation with nonessentials one has hit the post instead of the target it supports. The author of one of the first Carolina folk plays says she "scoured the countryside to find a log cabin to serve as a model"

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for the setting of her play. "For," she said, "if the cabin used in a play of fisher-people contains logs larger than the trees in that section . . . the author and producer will be sure to hear about it." Writers of folk plays have been preoccupied, too, with folk dialect. The characters of Synge, Green and Riggs, it is admitted, have given the theater some badly needed poetry. But interest in folk speech as such has tended also to retard dramatic action, to make the folk play loquacious. It produces a literary, not a dramatic, theater. If dialect is authentically recorded and pronounced it falls so strange upon the ear that the spectator either fails to understand it or is forced to pay it so much attention as to destroy the nice equilibrium between aural, visual and kinesthetic appeals characteristic of the best theater. Audiences have been charmed into uncritical approbation of the folk play by something lying beyond the central province of the theater. They will not continue indefinitely to be so charmed, perhaps not even so long as will be required for the radio and other standardizing forces to level out the dialects. Then, perhaps, the folk play will take on a new interest; but its importance will be historical rather than dramatic.

As a final consequence of their emphasis upon native content, authors of the folk play have committed the sin unpardonable in the theater, the crime of being monotonous. Even had fresh young writers of stature been at hand the Irish could not have gone on forever weaving slim comedies of their men who played dead, or tragedies, however elevated with grandeur, of women against the sea. They struck a rich, and narrow, vein and mined it; now their shaft lies abandoned like many another prosperous venture. Similarly the Carolina Playmakers have now contributed their tragedy of tenant farm life, their rural comedy, their mountain drama, their epic of the Negro. Should young authors be advised to attempt a second *Huckleberry Finn*? It would seem that the Carolina Playmakers now face, and folk writers in other regions are soon to face, a crisis. Every reason for the decline of the Abbey Theater points to the early death of American folk playmaking.

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But, having run a good race and having kept his first faith, Koch apparently has not finished the course. He will not allow American folk dramatists to be lowered into a grave beside the Irish if he can help it. If North Carolina's vein has been worked out, he would say, that of many American regions is still largely unassayed. One of the original aims of the Playmakers was "to extend their influence in the establishment of a native theater in other states." Similar groups have been started at other universities. With truth as well as symbolism Koch called his largest collection of student-written plays, a volume representing eighteen states and Canada and Mexico, *American Folk Plays*. Two years ago the Carolina Playmakers of the Air, which appears regularly on a nationwide radio network, was formed. To date, however, most of the offerings of this new group have been radio adaptations of previously written folk plays.

Broadening the field, however, will not prove sufficient. Writers from many states and foreign countries can hardly hope to attain the homogeneity that in the beginning marked both the Abbey and the Playmaker groups. If the folk dramatists are to celebrate their artistic maturity they must correct some of the errors in their theory of drama. They must take steps to keep younger authors from thinking a folk play results when eccentric characters of opposed interests talk pretty or quaint dialect in a mountain cabin or tenant shack. They must teach young writers to find the dramatic value of native materials where it is and has always been—not in the folk trappings but in the human problem. Given the struggle for existence in the year 1942 as a theme, one will have little time for preoccupation with the spelling of dialect, small care whether the rocks thrown by strikebreakers and strikers are indigenous to Gaston County. Let American folk dramatists forget their folkiness and get down to their legitimate business—writing plays that will help Americans understand other Americans. If they wish to avoid the fate of the Irish here lies their open road.

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Will the American College Survive?

FREDERICK P. KEPPEL

IN MY report as president of the Carnegie Corporation for 1940 I made the following statement:

> There are today in the United States far more universities, colleges and other operating institutions, and far more voluntary organizations for worthy purposes than the nation can possibly afford. In the years to come many of these are bound to disappear. . . .

This statement was made not for its own sake but as incidental to another point I was trying to make. Plucked from its context, however, it received wide publicity and I was taken to task for having made it at all and called upon on behalf of the American college to state specifically which institutions should survive and which should disappear. Of course no one knows this nor would he proclaim it if he did. The real significance of my statement was entirely missed, namely, that in the face of circumstances and trends over which the individual institutions have no control and of which they often have no realization, a critical general situation is inevitably developing.

Let me say at the outset that the entry of the United States into the second World War took place between the preparation of the body of this article and its publication. That momentous decision must of necessity change the immediate future of the American college in many ways. In any attempt to take a longer view ahead, however, the points I have attempted to make clear in this article are, in my own judgment at any rate, still worthy of consideration.

Perhaps the best way to indicate the group of institutions I have in mind when I say the American college is to avoid definition but do some preliminary excluding. It does not include the undergraduate departments of universities, nor any urban institutions that lack a dormitory system and do not draw

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a fair share of their students from outside the city, nor does it embrace institutions primarily vocational in character, whatever the degree offered. On the other hand some colleges with an engineering department, like Swarthmore, or with a conservatory of music, like Oberlin, would not be ruled out. After all, my readers must have a pretty good idea themselves about the old-fashioned American college.

Our American colleges were founded and have been maintained thus far upon certain assumptions, some of which at least are no longer tenable. Those current before 1850 have perforce been modified in the light of later experience. Younger colleges were founded upon somewhat different presuppositions that in their turn are in process of modification. Almost from the first, however, there has been a lag between assumption and recognition of realities. There is such a lag today; and it is my belief that the most serious danger to many an American college lies in the refusal of its trustees and administration, its faculty and students and "public," to face the facts. They hug the false assumptions to their breasts instead.

Let me give some illustrations. One assumption is that of a steadily and rapidly-rising population—a young population at that, a high proportion of the total at college age. The truth is that, partly because of restricted immigration but more significantly because of a declining birth rate, notably in the groups from which the colleges draw their students, the potential college population today is not rising but at this moment actually declining. Furthermore, it has been assumed that the population would not only grow but would continue to spread geographically. There was no contemplation of the swingback to the cities or of the concentration of educational and other facilities within them.

Another assumption was made: that the cost of college education could be kept permanently at a modest figure and financed primarily from student fees, themselves modest; that the chief item of expense, professors' salaries, could be set at about the rewards of ministers of the Gospel (indeed most of the early

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professors were themselves clergymen). The founders and their successors did not reckon on the inevitable expenses of adequate libraries, well-equipped laboratories and recreation facilities or the costs of newer subjects like art and music. They did not foresee the increases, not sufficient it is true but still substantial, in academic salaries. Higher outlays for these necessary purposes were inevitable but in addition the colleges in all too many cases put themselves to further, and unnecessary expense—directly through attempts to keep up with or surpass their rivals at every point, and indirectly by permitting donors to give the wrong things, costly and relatively useless things, in the hope that later on they could be persuaded to give the right ones.

Later on, when the state universities came into the picture and the development of the endowed universities took place, it was taken for granted that the rough balance of undergraduate attendance, as divided among state university, endowed university and separate college, would be maintained. The colleges, however, have steadily lost ground.

One further assumption was made (and still is): that a college was a college and that the title would continue to specify a four-year nonvocational institution. Instead of this the junior college with its two-year curriculum, first established in California and now spreading eastward throughout the country, today accounts for some 15 per cent of the total undergraduate attendance. The tax-supported state college, expanded from a normal or an agricultural school, is an even more recent competitor of the old-fashioned college.

The present belief that college education is *ipso facto* nonvocational in character has had a curious background. Our earliest college was founded to provide an "educated ministry"; later on small schools of medicine and law were added to existing colleges but were usually soon dropped if the institution did not develop into a university. Engineering departments, however, proved to be more permanent in character. Pressure for schools or departments of business, journalism, home economics and the like has been a recent phenomenon.

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In thinking of financial support we have to bear in mind other postulates. For decades people were convinced that church collections would make up the annual gap between fees and costs and that an individual donor could be found to provide new buildings when needed. Related to this was a further presupposition: that the votaries of each religious denomination would continue to support their own brand of college teaching. Later on when large gifts from alumni and local magnates, foundations and individuals interested in advancing college education in general were received, these new sources of money were added to the financial assumptions and at the rates established in the prosperous Twenties.

Colleges seek students and money and to a greater or less degree are in competition with one another for them. They need students not only to carry out the primary purpose of a college but to obtain fees for tuition and other services and to enhance their own prestige. They are particularly eager for new students today because those they have already enrolled are being drawn away by military and defense calls. They need money to supplement their income from fees and from endowment, particularly since practically every college is faced with a decrease in the latter.

What in very general terms is the present situation as to students? Certain unfavorable factors have already been mentioned. Both the restriction of immigration and the falling birth rate affect the population of college age; the state universities and urban universities, the junior colleges and the recently-established state colleges as well are all drawing heavily from the common stock of young people; the appeal of engineering and other technological institutions is naturally greater in times like the present. Furthermore not only are military and defense demands drawing students away from college; they are heading them off before they get there.

To be sure, the girls are immune from the influence of most of these distracting factors and they make up a substantial proportion of the total registration. It is also true that because

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there is much more money in circulation, more families may now feel able to provide a higher education for their children. Finally, there are signs of a countercurrent toward the independent institutions, with their emphasis on community life and, in the East (hitherto backward in this respect), toward coeducation.

Now as to money—despite the general impression to the contrary, the volume of individual gifts for benevolent purposes is not falling off in the United States. The totals remain surprisingly constant from year to year. But within the annual total, gifts for higher education are diminishing and those currently made for this purpose tend to be concentrated upon a small number of universities and other "prestige" institutions.

It should be added that one temporary but very welcome help to the colleges may be at an end. In grants to students of higher education the pump-priming operations of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration and the National Youth Administration amounted to a total of $102,334,891 for the academic years 1934 to 1942. This aid has worked both ways. It has encouraged a large number of boys and girls to go to college, and, although one hears of many a useless task assigned, these students must in the aggregate have made a substantial contribution to the colleges in services.

The federal government may decide as it did in 1918 to take over the colleges or a good many of them as training centers for officers and for concentrated instruction in special techniques; or it may go part way by enlisting or enrolling students —perhaps putting them into uniform and providing drill, but ordering them to go ahead with their academic studies subject to call for active service. Each step would tide the colleges over the attendance emergency and probably the financial emergency as well, but there is no certainty or even immediate probability that either measure will be adopted or that, if taken, it will cover all the institutions now most in need of help.

In the light of the evidence it seems likely that under present conditions there will not be enough students or enough

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money for all the independent colleges of liberal arts now in the market. Here I find myself repeating the statement that got me into trouble in 1940. But if true then it is even truer now.

For convenience in discussion we talk of the American college, but the typical college is just about as nonexistent as the economic man. We are only just beginning to realize how wide is the range of individual variability within the species. Some few people had their suspicions beforehand but it took the long, expensive and painstaking inquiry known as the Pennsylvania Study to demonstrate the fact. Not only is the fact itself significant; so also is the evidence that parents and students are beginning to find it out and in increasing numbers are selecting colleges for other than sentimental or traditional reasons. The same process is beginning to work in the minds of potential donors. In their inquiries into such matters, people are realizing it is no longer necessary to take the word of interested officers or alumni. It is much better to examine the product of the college in question, and this is not impossible. One may turn, for example, to the professional schools for useful information. Today all of the first-class medical schools and certain of the law schools rigidly limit the admission of students. Their officers have discovered that students from certain institutions are much better risks than students from others. And, of course with individual exceptions, educational officers apply this knowledge in the selection of candidates for admission. An examination of the student rosters of the crack schools of medicine and law would throw some useful light on the colleges whose students are welcomed at these institutions.

Just as we had to go back a long way to find the origin of assumptions that are no longer valid but that still bedevil many a college, so we must go back, though not so far, to discover one important reason for the fact that some colleges are less able than others to bear the strains of the present emergency. We must look at the depression years, say 1930 to 1933. In many sections of the country during that period there was an indecent scramble for students. Standards were lowered, alike

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for admission, promotion and retention in college. Scholarships were used for anything but scholarship. College sports were prostituted. Hastily planned and meagerly financed vocational courses were put on sale. Meanwhile professors' salaries were reduced; vacancies were inadequately filled; libraries and equipment were neglected. These were bitterly hard years and I am not recalling them for the purpose of sitting in judgment but rather to explain why, when the new crisis came in 1940, not a few colleges found themselves already mortgaged up to the hilt, morally as well as financially.

Let us turn back for a moment to our assumptions. One of the earliest held the campus of an independent college to be the ideal soil for character building. This assumption is much less often invoked today in the interests of doctrinal orthodoxy than it was in the past, but the development of Christian character is still a favorite talking point in favor of the smaller college. Throughout the ages mankind has developed nothing finer than Christian character, and a good, honestly run American college is an excellent place to foster it. It is, however, flying in the face of the evidence to pretend that institutions of this type have any monopoly on its nurturing. And, alas, it is all too easy to point to colleges making loud protestations in this regard when their athletics are patently corrupt, when their scholarships are hawked in the open market, when the stated requirements for admission and promotion are more honored in the breach than the observance, when the statements in their catalogues about the quality of their offerings are simply not true. I don't say it is impossible for a boy or girl to retain or even to develop a Christian character in such an institution, but the environmental conditions are certainly not favorable.

Frankly, I am not disturbed about the question of ultimate financial support for the independent college which should and will survive. The American people may be relied upon to see to this. Support for the immediate future, however, is another matter. Many of the old and obvious ways won't work today.

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Fees have already been raised about as far as the traffic will stand. Any attempt to increase income from investment is too risky. Recent professionally directed campaigns for funds for specific institutions have failed to bring the hoped-for results. Individuals who could have been relied upon in the past for substantial gifts are either strapped today or have delusions of income-tax poverty. The liberal arts college cannot turn, as the technical schools are successfully doing, to industry for financial help. It is anybody's guess as to what can be drawn in smaller sums from alumni and other "friends of the college." Certainly there is more money in circulation than at any time since 1929; certainly there will be fewer opportunities to spend it for new cars or other personal purposes. On the other hand the legitimate demands upon individuals with which the college must today compete are formidable.

The strain will not be uniformly exerted, for even among the best of our colleges the backlog of endowment is very unevenly distributed. Some have been fortunate enough to have solved their building and equipment problems while the going was good; others have not. A small number of "prestige" colleges have been able to pick their freshman class from a large number of qualified candidates. Obviously these colleges will have relatively less trouble in keeping their ranks full. Some institutions will have to break extravagant habits acquired in days of affluence; others, and these will include the best of the girls' colleges, are used to being hard up. As I see it, the most fortunate will suffer nothing worse than inconvenience during the immediate future. Others, equally worthy, are for a while going to be hard put to it to make both ends meet.

In any discussion of financial matters between a college president or treasurer and a man in my line of business, one question is sure to arise at this point: does not the present situation offer a marvelous opportunity to the foundations? Well, it does offer opportunities for help in specific instances, relatively few in number; but the foundations simply cannot provide any general solution to the problem. Were the institutions of higher

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education in this country to ask for and to receive every penny of the capital funds of the four foundations which have thus far been their chief supporters, the gift would not pay their aggregate annual appeals for a single year at the present rate of expenditure—and the goose that hitherto had laid golden eggs from income would be no more. If this theoretical and, of course, wholly impossible distribution were made on the basis of student attendance, a college with 300 students would receive about $100,000.

Let us assume, as I think we must, that many a college that deserves to live will find it impossible to maintain its present income. Must it then become a junior college, where current resources would be sufficient to provide the relatively inexpensive costs of the freshman and sophomore years, or should it effect a merger with one or more other institutions in the same predicament, with the resultant lowering of per capita cost, or should it just die?

I do not think these alternatives exhaust the possibilities. Colleges which have not already watered their stocks have resources not as yet fully exploited. Without lowering the quality of their offerings they can reduce expenses in a number of ways. They can accomplish this by group cooperation, as Bryn Mawr, Haverford and Swarthmore are already doing—incidentally enriching their curricula thereby. They can further develop and take fuller advantage of such cooperative projects as those organized and conducted by the Association of American Colleges. In various ways they can simplify their community life. And they can stop any attempts they are making to keep up with the academic Joneses. Some may use their plants to better advantage by putting them on a twelve-month basis, and at the same time attract students who will today give three years but not four to college training. Others in thickly settled regions may turn an honest and useful penny by employing faculty, rooms and equipment for community adult education with courses on current events, refresher programs in science and the like. The colleges can do other things, within

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limits. They can shorten sail by lending professors and instructors needed by government or industry. In the light of present conditions coeducational colleges which now limit the proportion of women students can temporarily raise this proportion.

Finally, in certain cases, a college may give evidence of its faith in the future by spending capital. Many unrestricted gifts and bequests of prosperous days, properly put into endowment at the time, might now with equal propriety be withdrawn therefrom and used to meet current expenses. Or the college might borrow money on mortgage or other security, for current expenses. I realize this would be dangerous advice if followed generally but in certain instances it would be sound.

How long these more or less artificial devices must be continued I should not dare to guess but it won't be forever. In some cases an unexpected gift or bequest may bring the period of purgatory to an end. In others the alumni or other friends of the college may find themselves not so tax-poor as they thought and will come more generously to the rescue. Some few colleges which on their record deserve to live as independent institutions will, I fear, have to give up the fight—not because they haven't done good honest work but because they are in the wrong place, as, for example, in a region which has in one way or another become blighted or may lie too near the actinic rays of a stronger institution. On the other hand, by grace of a financial windfall, some which less well deserve to do so will persist.

In general, however, it will be a matter of the survival of the fittest. The question of the moment is one of survival for the present under difficult conditions; but sooner or later the day will come when demand and supply and support for this typically American institution, the liberal arts college, will again be in balance.

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Dictators and the Gentle Art of Collecting

DOUGLAS AND ELIZABETH RIGBY

AS INEVITABLY as an amiable dog precedes his wagging tail the word "collecting" carries with it, at least for most of us, the notion of a tranquil activity. Certainly an image of the brutal man, the man of cold violence, is hardly invoked when this pursuit, so affectionately referred to by amateurs as "the gentle art," is called to mind. Yet frequently the most ruthless tyrants, invaders and usurpers of power have also been gatherers of the fine instruments of culture. That many despots are primarily destroyers is of course true; but from history's infancy there have been men who experienced no less pride and gusto in seizing upon such things as paintings and manuscripts than in adding a new nation to a tally of military conquest. Tyrants and conquerors are strongly marked by that acquisitiveness which is the basis for all collecting, and the effects of their activities in cultural fields can therefore be deeply significant.

Whenever the march of a despot is launched, all existing collections within reach are in potential danger either of destruction or of dismemberment. Both processes are evident in Europe today where, despite the heavy pall of censorship, it becomes increasingly clear that national and privately owned treasures allowed survival by Hitler are being gathered in with avidity by the newest dictator and his ambitious henchmen. Were the dictator always to confine himself to theft, historian and antiquarian, at least, might forgive him; for the objective scholar can reason that mere transfer of cultural property from one owner to another need not be in the long run an unmitigated evil; and it is true that, irrespective of their intention,

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many of the world's most violent looters have preserved valuable tools for the workshops of future historian and scientist. Unfortunately, however, the exigencies of seizing and holding power do not always permit of the relatively benign course of appropriation. Of necessity the dictator is usually a killer of those who actively oppose his will; and by the same token he is often, at least at the outset of his career, a killer of things that deny his doctrine—a burner of books and a purger of art. Holding a knife to his victim's throat, the tyrant may edit, curtail or prohibit those works through which peoples have attained eloquence. Herein lies the most dismal aspect of the dictator's relationship to the world's painfully assembled records of civilization.

Although today we naturally think of Adolf Hitler, he is of course only the latest specimen of an ancient breed. More than two thousand years ago, for example, there lived in China a man so much like him that one should draw attention to the resemblance. Shih Huang-ti managed to conquer all the states neighboring on his own domain and to make of them for a short while a single nation. It was he who built the Great Wall to protect this "First Universal Empire" of which he was so proud. And, in order to render impotent his enemies within the gates, he issued a roster of harsh and repressive dictates, the most famous of which earned for its promulgator that hateful title, "Burner of the Books," by which the centuries have known him—an epithet which, as Hitler might well note, has obscured whatever good the ancient "unifier" actually accomplished for his people. Not only did Shih Huang-ti order all books burned that could be quoted in contradiction of his political dogma, those by Confucius included, he also decreed that the temples (for which we might substitute museums) be purged because the relics and art objects they contained were symbols of an honored tradition blocking the path of the "new order." Priests, scholars and collectors who refused to pile their own and their nation's treasures upon the holocaust were buried alive or were sent to an equally certain death as slave-laborers

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on the Great Wall. Then as now the purpose of such destruction was to ensure the standing of the dictator and his aims; for Shih Huang-ti and his advisers recognized, as does Hitler, how mighty can be works of art, literature and historic relics in molding the minds and bolstering the wavering spirits of unwillingly subjected men.

But even while such grim murderers systematically engage their opponents they are likely to be patriarchal and creatively ambitious, setting up and cherishing cultural forms that seem to accord with their own doctrines, erecting monuments for themselves of those art-forms that bear witness to their prowess; and all this they would bequeath, with royal largess, as endorsed cultural heritage to the peoples under their leadership. Such proceedings often carry a prestige which can be of great political service to a dictator in winning the esteem of his subjects. Napoleon was one who recognized these prestige values; but long before his day a far more ruthless and destructive aggressor, Ashurbanipal, the Assyrian, went deep into the subject.

In the Assyria of the 7th century B. C. religion was not a matter to be lightly scuffled about and even the fiercest of despots found it expedient to tread softly where priests walked in power among the people. Yet Ashurbanipal aspired to an unrivaled rule—not even the servants of the gods should share authority with him. The Assyrian recognized that in its control of the educational system the entrenched priesthood exercised a great hold over his subjects. In ancient Mesopotamian lands, temples were not only places of worship; they were banks, art galleries, libraries and schools as well. And where books and teachers are gathered, there political philosophies are thickest. Musing on this, Ashurbanipal decided to establish a palace library greater than any temple collection in the realm. To it he would admit scholars and perhaps the public, and to his name would accrue a prestige as great as that which then formed an aura about the name of Sargon of Akkad, reputed to have owned such a library more than two thousand years earlier.

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The plan resolved, Ashurbanipal went to work. And here the paradox of the destroyer-collector grows luminous; for as the clay tablets which were the books of his land accumulated, this "scourge of the East" gradually became as possessive an amateur as ever lived. Blasting a passionate curse upon any would-be pilferer, his original bookplate-seal still trumpets the message:

> Whosoever shall carry off this tablet, or shall inscribe his name upon it side by side with mine own, may Ashur and Belit overthrow him in wrath and anger and may they destroy his name and prosperity in the land!

There is also a letter, a clay tablet accredited to Ashurbanipal, bearing an equally revealing message to one of his many agents. To make sure that no volume was overlooked the royal collector sent three assistants to his book-hunter. The tablet reads:

> Word of the king to Shadunu. It is well with me; mayest thou be happy. When thou receivest this letter take with thee these three men . . . and the learned men of Borsippa [at Borsippa there was an important temple] and seek out all the tablets, all those that are in their houses and all those that are deposited in the temple of Ezida. . . . Hunt for the valuable tablets which are in your archives and which do not exist in Assyria and send them to me. I have written to the officials and the overseers and no one shall withhold a tablet from thee, and when thou seest any tablet or ritual about which I have not written to thee, but which thou perceivest may be profitable for my palace, seek it out, pick it up and send it to me.

This power to lay hands on any desired object has made effective collectors of many dictators and their little brothers. Hitler, marching into Vienna, can take a priceless Vermeer for which Andrew Mellon and Lord Duveen had each vainly offered a million and a quarter dollars. Goering, visiting a German provincial town, can refuse as not good enough the municipality's hopeful offering of an illuminated manuscript and demand instead two prize Cranach paintings from the local gallery, or order the Berlin Museum to deliver to his home a newly acquired "Diana of the Chase" that happens to strike his

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fancy. "No one shall withhold a tablet from thee," wrote Ashurbanipal; and in one form or another such commands have been issued by his kind in all times and in all places.

Occasionally the command must be backed by a show of force, but in duels for possession the innocent collector is an obvious outsider. It was so when the Emperor Nero cast covetous eyes upon the prize item in Petronius' beloved collection—a murrha bowl for which the satirist is said to have paid the equivalent of $320,000: the messenger who brought the Emperor's "request" also bore a draught of hemlock by way of emphasis. True, Petronius is reported to have smashed the bowl after ironically drinking the poison from it, and there have been other equally uncooperative collectors in the world's history, but not often are tyrants so cheated.

When the Ptolemies, Greek-born seizers of the Pharaohs' ancient throne, were assembling their great library at Alexandria, Ptolemy Euergetes, third of the line, wanted very much to possess the original manuscripts of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, treasures that were then in Athens. The king therefore dispatched emissaries to that city with a polite request for a loan of the manuscripts until his scribes should have had time to copy them. The messengers also carried with them a sum of money to be deposited as security. When, the request having been naively granted, the works arrived in Egypt, copies were duly executed—but Ptolemy returned the copies to the disconsolate Athenians who were told that they might keep the deposit in forfeit for the irreplaceable originals. With less resort to skulduggery, less being required, the same autocrat appropriated all books brought into his country by foreigners; the hapless owners, like the Athenians, had no choice but to accept the inferior copies supplied in pseudo-compensation.

Christendom in the 16th century had a Pope who combined the techniques of Ashurbanipal and Ptolemy. Like Ashurbanipal he demanded for his book-hunters free access to all libraries, while his agents, like those of Ptolemy, were instructed to seize such rare manuscripts as could not be bought, restitution to be

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made in the form of the less desirable printed editions. All this was done, as Pope Leo himself put it, "for the good of scholarship." And, aside from the outrage to personal feelings and individual rights, it is quite true that such appropriations have often secured important cultural items to the future inasmuch as museums and libraries—property of state, church or ruler—are generally permanent and well-cared-for whereas small collections, sometimes badly housed, are in a continuous process of dispersal and are more exposed to accident and loss.

More than once later scholarship has profited immensely by such "benign" dictatorial acts. Efficient in the manner of the Nazi Gestapo, Ashurbanipal's agents assembled over thirty thousand tablets covering the entire range of Mesopotamian culture. This library, unearthed at Nineveh in the 19th century of our era, has, perhaps more than any other single discovery, helped scholars to reconstruct a thousand years of early history. Again, the library of the Ptolemies, used by Hellenistic savants, became the channel through which most surviving Greek literature has reached us. Much later the manuscript sleuths and humanist scholars of the Italian renaissance, often acting under orders from the powerful Popes, thought nothing of stealing literary treasures from the northern monasteries. The monastic system was by that time far gone in decline. Therefore, in preventing the complete disappearance of much of our ancient heritage, this forcible transplantation of valuable classic works —many of which had long been lost to sight—supplemented both the job done a thousand years before at Alexandria and the later work of the medieval monk-copyists.

Closer to our own time it was Napoleon's invasion of Egypt that gave birth to the modern science of Egyptology. Without that invasion Egyptian hieroglyphics might have remained a closed book and the wealth of knowledge opened up by their deciphering might be even yet only a morass of conjecture. Happening upon the key, the now famous Rosetta Stone, one of Napoleon's young officers thought to save the puzzlingly inscribed fragment only because every member of the French

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army had been told to gather up each least object that might conceivably be useful to the artists and savants who accompanied the expedition. The Rosetta Stone—of such great importance that in 1810 the victorious English exacted its delivery to the British Museum—was the most precious single item in the vast collections formed during those years. Yet even had this master-key eluded the net, the non-military achievements of the Egyptian Expedition would have been revolutionary; for Napoleon was one of those conquerors who, in contrast to the destroyers, see aggrandizement of a nation achieved by the acquisition not only of territory but of cultural treasure.

Bonaparte's exploitation of Egypt for this purpose was memorable and in its extent perhaps unique. Antiquarians, archeologists, orientalists and Arabic scholars, architects, draughtsmen and engineers, painters, musicians and writers, chemists, physicists, mathematicians, astronomers, mineralogists, naturalists and research physicians journeyed with the French armies to the Valley of the Nile. They constituted the *Commission des Sciences et des Arts* which, straightway upon its arrival and in the midst of battle, set up headquarters at Quassim Bey's palace in Cairo and started out to comb the countryside. Their prospectus declared:

> The conquest of Egypt must be useful to France not only politically and commercially: the sciences and arts must also profit by it. . . . The aim we are setting ourselves is to make Egypt known not only to the French who are now there, but also to France and to Europe. Up to the present, the resources of this celebrated country and even its topographical situation have not been well known.

Traveling everywhere, often under the most trying conditions, these men—instructed by a dictator, be it remembered—observed, studied, recorded and collected so much and to such good effect that never afterward could it be said of Egypt that her resources, cultural or physical—her plants, animals and stones, her languages old and new, her folk tunes, her very diseases, her modern customs and dusty antiquities—were "not well known."

Yet it should not be assumed that Bonaparte was the first

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ruler who could boast of making such contributions to culture nor the first to envisage the promotion of public good through forcibly buttressed collecting. Behind time's intervening mists we may catch a glimpse of one of Napoleon's ancient prototypes in that very land whose history the Emperor of the French helped reveal to the modern world. Thutmose III, old Egypt's "little Napoleon"—like Bonaparte in size and like him too in aggressive ambition—marched into Syria and came back from the Battle of Megiddo with a great haul of Syrian art and captive artists who were to teach their secrets to Egyptian craftsmen; came back also with a vast collection of botanical specimens which he ordered catalogued on stone in a special chamber of Karnak temple. In Greece the earliest libraries were assembled by the Athenian "tyrant," Peisistratus, and the Samian, Polycrates. And, much later, it was the Roman soldier-dictator, Sulla (reputedly the first true connoisseur in that martial city), who had the wit to plunder Aristotle's library which upon its arrival is said to have marked "a special moment in the higher education of the Latins."

It was Sulla, too, who invented a weapon—still kept bright in authoritarian lands—which the Romans called "proscription." Initiated as a means for extirpating political opposition, the proscription lists, like many such despotic tools, shortly became a means for the satisfaction of mere personal grudges and cupidities. They served the dictator-collectors more than well. In Sulla's day a man's sole crime—for which his life, his property, or both might be forfeit—often lay in his ownership of some Greek statue or perhaps a citrus-wood table. Pompey, Marc Antony, even the youthful Octavian, all availed themselves at times of this convenient dragnet and stooped thus to enrich, with loot, their libraries and private art galleries, their cabinets of engraved gems, their collections of fine furniture. Those owners who, when given a chance to say anything at all, were so unwise as to say them nay seldom lived to think twice on the refusal. The senator, Nonius, was proscribed by Antony

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for refusing to part with a rare opal "the size of a hazelnut." And Verres, the plundering ex-governor of Sicily, perished on the altar of the same Triumvir's passion for Corinthian bronze vases.

Pomp, circumstance and ruthless assertion of power played the largest part in this dictatorial collecting. True appreciation was very faint indeed. Yet in time, even in Rome, some individuals became serious collectors, turning the pursuit itself into a minor art. Among the dictators Julius Caesar, chief exemplar of the true amateur and intelligent connoisseur, was one of the first to see, in collections privately formed, the educational possibilities of the public institution. Caesar collected paintings, sculpture, books, engraved gems and beautiful furniture, acquiring modern art as well as old—a sign, particularly then, of an independent mind and taste. Some items he loved so possessively that he often took them along on his campaigns. Yet after he had installed a gallery of painting and sculpture in his gardens on the Tiber he opened them to the populace. He had planned to bequeath most of his treasures to the people of Rome. Moreover, had he lived to carry out another cherished project, under way at the time of his assassination, his would have been the honor of founding the first public library in that city. (Rome had no important collections of books until fairly late in its history; its earliest were brought in as plunder from Greece.) Under the influence of Marcus Varro, whom Caesar had engaged to bring together the necessary volumes, the library project was eventually carried to conclusion. The Emperor Augustus himself established two libraries, thus confirming the precedent set by Caesar. Thereafter the ball started rolling in earnest; eventually Rome had an abundance of public collections.

Housed in the pagan temples, the libraries of Rome disappeared with the Empire, for Christians shunned them and left them prey to worms and rotting damp, to fire, crumbling walls and the barbarian. It was then that the Dark Age crept over Europe. Yet even the Dark Age had its Charlemagne. That

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hard Frankish conqueror of unwilling Saxon and Lombard, of Slavonic Bohemian and Mongolian Avar, was not pleased by the ignorance of his own people. He therefore sent across the Channel for Alcuin, the Learned, to build up a court library and school at Aachen and, incidentally, to advise on the warrior's private collection of books. In the midst of darkness Charlemagne's court became a bright center of a temporary renaissance, lit at the behest of a man who had extended his rule-by-force over most of Europe.

Later, when the true renaissance found its voice, many similar benefactors were men curiously compounded of lust for power and a thirst for beauty and knowledge. One of the first of that long line of merchant princes for which the modern age has been noted—Cosimo de' Medici, who made himself and his heirs unofficial but all-powerful rulers of 15th-century Florence—created the first public library in modern Italy. His private book collection, added to by his successors, became the nucleus for the great Laurentian Library. The Medicis, Federigo da Montefeltro and his sons at Urbino, the Sforzas of Milan, the Visconti of Pavia, the Gonzagas, the Estes, the Farneses, even the Borgias, all collected books and art, old and new; and though many of these men were at first military adventurers who acquired rulership by force and treachery, they fostered an era of such creative fertility that we still look back upon it with wonder.

Then came marauding kings from the North who, smitten with admiration for Italian magnificence, carried the renaissance to "barbarian" France and laid the foundations for the great collections that were for so long to make Paris and the French *châteaux* goals of the Western world. Those collections were further enriched by two ministerial dictators—dictators even though the title was lacking—the Cardinals Richelieu and Mazarin, neither of whom hesitated to use the most autocratic methods if necessary to obtain pictures, books and *objets d'art* for his private purposes. When, for example, the Protestant town of La Rochelle was sacked and burned, Richelieu

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topped off the victory by seizing the town's library for himself. And Mazarin unscrupulously tricked the exiled Italian, Cardinal Barberini, into turning over a highly prized Correggio by pretending that the Queen Regent (to whom Barberini owed his safety) had especially requested it for herself.

Once formed, the collecting habit often reveals in power-driven men the paradox of hawk and pigeon nesting together. Napoleon gathered up art for political prestige and books for his own enjoyment. Although he had an art collection of his own at Malmaison (reputedly quite mediocre), he never laid claim to connoisseurship in this field and it is doubtful that he lavished any real love on most of the great statues and paintings he poured into the museums of his country. Yet he made the acquisition of such works an integral part of his political scheme, for, with a shrewd knowledge of the French, he calculated that any man who gave them spoils of this sort could add nicely to his own popularity. He also knew that a nation which practically corners the art of a whole civilization becomes the recipient of that civilization's esteem, however grudgingly accorded. In both respects he was correct. Parisians went mad with joy when the huge crates bearing the best treasures of a continent were landed on the quays of the Seine. Cheering, and blessing Bonaparte's name, they followed the loaded wagons on their triumphant way to the Louvre, soon to become the greatest storehouse of artistic wealth Europe had ever known. And when it later came to pass that most of this stolen wealth had to be restored, the French people protested with such genuine anguish that it could be said they seemed to regret this loss far more than military defeat.

It was not the loss of art that Napoleon himself mourned after Waterloo. Yet even in the midst of ultimate disaster the fallen Titan gave thought, as always, to his beloved books: he had once declared he could not imagine a home without a library, and like Cicero he had had one in every house he owned. For each of his campaigns special traveling bookcases had been

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constructed, so that the Little Corporal might take with him a large number of volumes of his own selection. After his defeat he asked to be allowed to carry a library with him to his island exile. Perhaps because he so truly loved books Napoleon was usually more considerate of foreign bibliophiles than he ever was of conquered art lovers. There had been, true enough, at least one occasion on which his collector's soul could not resist a unique "association item"—the copy of Montesquieu's work on the Roman Empire, fully annotated in the hand of Frederick the Great, that he saw lying on the table of Frederick William III. A history of Imperial Rome over which the great Prussian once had pored, setting his personal mark upon it, seemed surely intended for the new Caesar—and Napoleon, embracing Fate's dictum, simply lifted it. On numerous other occasions, however, he was rigidly scrupulous about returning books that had been lent to him (as when, after the retreat from Moscow, he took time to order procured, at any price, duplicates of certain volumes he had borrowed from the Royal Library at Dresden and had lost in the subsequent catastrophe).

With enemies and canny aspirants to favor ever vigilant for the exposure of a vulnerable spot on the tough hide of the power-ruler, the passion for collecting can often be counted on to supply the required Achilles heel. Even the wily Ptolemy was inveigled into forming a doubtful political alliance with certain Greek states when their leader, Aratus of Sicyon, promised to send him, in tribute, a selection of the much-prized Sicyonian works of art. When Lorenzo de' Medici, obviously no man's fool, called upon Pope Sixtus to seek a Cardinalship for his young brother (an appointment intended eventually to bring the Papacy itself into Medici hands) the pontiff was able to put off his powerful and usually adamant visitor with vague promises, merely because he was astute enough to make Lorenzo a gift of two exceptionally good antique marble busts and to allow him to purchase, at bargain prices, a quantity of artistic treasure from the papal storehouses. Lorenzo "returned home exulting"—but minus the Cardinalship.

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Not only has collectomania produced blind spots in many a ruler's drive-to-power. Occasionally its attraction has been so strong that monarchs to-the-power-born have been known to neglect their scepters on its behalf. For it is also human to be bored and though ambitious men would often tear the world apart to achieve the exercise of power, other men to whom rulership is easily available have sometimes turned their backs upon the controls of state, applying the best of their talents to the "gentle art" instead. There was Nabonidus of Babylon, last of the Chaldean kings, who spent his time restoring the historic monuments of his country and collecting its ancient inscriptions. His son, Belshazzar, saw upon the walls of a banquet hall the ghostly writing foreshadowing the approach of Persian and Mede—a danger that had been evident for some time; but Nabonidus, too bemused by the past and his collecting, too impatient of interruptions to attend the crude realities of threatening Aryans, enjoyed life in his own way until he lost both life and country in penalty for neglected defense. In 12th-century China the Emperor Hui-Tsung, whose name has had almost saintly significance for later amateurs, likewise lost his kingdom to an invader because he was too intent upon his favorite pursuit to find time for political realism. To the list add Charles I of England, preeminently great as an art collector, preeminently weak and ineffective as a king. And add, also, Charles's Oriental contemporary, Jahangir, that Mogul ruler of India of whom it has been said that "he would have been a better and a happier man had he been head of a natural history museum" and who, though an intelligent and generous patron of art and a good collector in several fields, left the foundations of his throne so shaky that his son was easily tumbled off. Out of the side of the hungerless spring the hungry. Leadership is often snatched away, and the cycle begins again with a new dictator—as in our time it happened when Mussolini shunted aside the little Italian king, an absorbed and excellent collector of coins.

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The Dilemma of Progress

CHARLES FRANKEL

THE idea of progress has been one of the most potent weapons in the arsenal of democracy. It is obvious, however, that under the impact of dangers which the present war has driven home, we are rebuilding much more than our military arm, and like the rest of our equipment our received beliefs about progress have to meet the challenge of the contemporary expansion of industrial society and the rising authority of scientific methods. Traditions, in order to remain alive, must enter effectively into present action. When they do so they, like other living things, are tested and remade. We do not simply inherit our beliefs; we *appropriate* them, making them fit us and ourselves fit them.

Hardly anyone today needs a reminder that the faith of our Victorian grandfathers in the inevitable progress of the human race has come to be a rather quaint chapter of history. Like so many other historical faiths by which men have lived, the idea of progress has largely ceased to occupy men's minds not because it has been refuted but because other concerns have come to seem more compelling and the immediacies of the moment more compulsory. In a time when we may have to give up a good part of what we have considered our natural portion merely to survive, a concern with progress may seem rather far down on the list of priorities. Indeed, now that our old faith in progress is dead, it is difficult to believe that it was ever alive. We recall that the Victorian age in which it flourished began with Coketown and ended with Charles Edward Montague's *Disenchantment*. We notice more clearly than we once did how many Victorians were doubtful that progress was worth the trouble. The Tennyson with whom we feel an affinity is as much the prophet of "the doubtful doom of humankind"

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as the poet who saw unfolding "the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world." The books of Aldous Huxley, we can now recognize, are the works of a contemporary Victorian, of a man controlled by the same climate of opinion as was that other Huxley who warned that the one increasing purpose running through the ages was at cross-purposes with everything distinctively humane.

Yet the very fact that the experience we are now undergoing has led us to recast the picture we had drawn of our predecessors should indicate that a concern with progress is unavoidable. We re-evaluate our past because we think that yesterday is today-in-the-making. The past is significant and takes on direction as the background of the present.

It is difficult to escape the suspicion that reflection on progress has to do with one of the most insistent themes in human experience. A creature that deals intellectually with means and ends cannot avoid asking whether this or that means is appropriate to this or that end, and what end has in fact been achieved. The history of man's activities is distinctively characterized by the presence of purposes and ends, both projected and attained, and reflection upon progress is provoked by the historian's attempt to establish a direction of events, and by the sense (or the illusion) of direction distinctive of human life.

Reflection upon this persistent problem has tended to be caught on the horns of a dilemma. The conditions that give rise to reflection upon the question of progress have also provoked either a relativistic or an absolutistic attitude toward a solution of the problem. A consideration of these two positions may perhaps give some clues as to the direction in which a more adequate solution of the question of progress lies. For a satisfactory notion of progress must avoid both of these alternatives while taking account of the conditions which give rise to them.

Paradoxically, an historical perspective provokes questions about progress and then appears to remove the grounds upon which these questions might be answered. History establishes the continuity of past and present, the fact that the present

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is heir to the materials left by the past. But when these materials are brought to bear upon the problems of a changing present they undergo criticism often so thorough-going they appear quite changed thereafter. Relativism articulates this aspect of the historical process. At the very time one is aware of being the child of an irrevocable past one must also be aware of a living past that is each day made new in the shifting light of the present. What we do with the materials left with us is hardly what our ancestors thought or hoped would be done with them. The classic picture comes to mind of Aeneas, fleeing from ruined Troy, carrying his father on his back and leading his child by the hand. Carrying the heritage and obligation imposed upon him by his past, he goes on to found Rome—which is, after all, not the Troy of his father.

The consciousness that times change and places differ is the basis of the belief that there is nothing constant in the historical process. Especially in a time of acute transition such as ours, and in the absence of standards that are anything more than the products of passing situations, it is easy to believe that progress must be a meaningless word. And this suspicion is strengthened because the development of the physical sciences, which systematically exclude the consideration of ends and goals from their sphere, and of the social sciences, which adopt this historical perspective for their own, has broken down the lines of communication between the notion of progress and the tenets that are intellectually most acceptable in our culture.

The distinctive aspect of the absolutist point of view consists in the attempt to meet the need for a constant by going beyond history to some higher authority. Since it is necessary to set up some standard by which progress can be measured, and since history exhibits no such constant standard, it must be sought elsewhere. Thus, the absolutist view of progress recognizes that each generation rewrites history in its own terms; but it goes beyond relativism in the conviction that this rewriting indicates merely that progress cannot be measured in terms derived from the historical process itself. Instead, progress

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must be defined with respect to some absolute, universal law antecedent to the passing standards of particular times and places. The words of St. Gregory catch the spirit behind this renunciation of a realm in which only the fleeting and the aimless is to be found: "Let us, therefore, despise with all our hearts this world, present or destroyed. Let us at least end our worldly longings with the end of the world." The philosophy of history associated with the name of St. Augustine, with the opposition it sets up between the City of God and the cities of the world, is the classic representative of this attitude. Another and more recent version of the same attitude looks for the culmination of history in some far-off divine event. Such a point of view falls into the absolutist category in employing a measuring-rod for progress not to be found in the record of the past.

The absolutist view of progress tends in the last analysis to have consequences that are not very different from relativism. Since the study of history cannot contribute to the establishment of a constant standard in terms of which progress can be measured, the discovery of such a standard marks a radical rupture in historical continuity. In the eyes of those who possess the new Truth the record of past opinion is simply the aimless record of error. Those who are able to measure progress because they possess an absolute standard feel themselves set off from others. Ultimately, resting the case for progress upon the demonstration of an absolute means placing the business of making progress in the hands of a restricted group or age which is somehow especially enlightened or empowered. Progress comes to be looked upon as the victory which is the fruit of battle between radically opposed sets of forces. We are governed by this attitude when we single out one special group or another to solve our problems such as "revolutionaries" or "liberals."

Furthermore, when progress is defined in terms of the approach to an end that is eternally fixed, the consequences are hardly distinguishable from the relativistic rejection of any possibility of defining progress. The contemporary mind suspects

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the standard held up as transcendent has in reality a social and psychological (perhaps a pathological) setting, and that what has been proclaimed as permanent is just one historic event among others. But even if the case be granted that progress can be defined in the abstract as the approach to a fixed end, such a definition would not tell us when a specific event is "progressive." For the standard in question (whatever it be) derives its validity from its place in a fixed rationalist system and not because of anything done to attain it. Because the means employed in the present do not affect one way or the other the security of the final goal, the absolutist notion of progress is useless for distinguishing between "progressive" and "non-progressive" events. The promise to pay in the future, the far-off divine event, can always remain splendidly fixed in the offing.

The difficulties that arise in both the relativistic and the absolutistic approaches to progress make it necessary to find some other. A clue to such an approach may be found in the same conditions that give rise to relativism and absolutism. Relativism is provoked by the growth and extension of the natural and social sciences, which exclude the consideration of ends or goals or treat them as the specific functions of changing and diverse situations. Absolutism, as in the case of Mr. Mortimer Adler, represents, most characteristically, a subordination of the experimental sciences because of just this inherent "positivism." Paradoxical as it may seem, however, this very same scientific enterprise can be, and has been, described as distinctively "modern" and typically "progressive." The test and aim of the scientific method is progress, as Francis Bacon pointed out in comparing it with other intellectual methods. The practicing scientist would be suspicious of any of his results that did not somehow entail a criticism and revision of his received materials or that did not lead on to still further inquiries. He takes the solution of any problem to be the beginning of another. Because knowledge has a natural tendency to grow we may in one sense say that if we have knowledge we must have progress.

On two levels such a method merits the adjective "progres-

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sive." In the first place there is an exemplification of progress every time a problem is successfully solved, for an objective has been attained. But it is on a second level that such progress becomes persistent and cumulative and answers more closely to the range of meaning covered in common usage by the term. With constant practice in solving problems, experimental inquiry checks and rectifies itself. As Bacon put it, "The art of discovery may advance as discoveries advance." At every moment the method employed by the scientist is the coming to fruition of a long and specialized course of investigation. The methods the past has employed for the conduct of its inquiries become the concern of the present because they contribute to improvement in the scientific method itself. On this second level the method of experimental science exemplifies progress to the extent that each special process of inquiry contributes, when it is reflected upon, to a continuous education in method.

The dilemma of progress is thus averted when we consider the question of progress from the point of view of the process of constant and cumulative criticism which we call the scientific enterprise. Our relativistic doubts that progress can be measured are prompted by the fact that we dwell in a world that will not stand still. But one reason that our world will not stand still is that it is progressive, that it is characterized by its possession of a persistently growing method of criticism. Bacon's vision of the House of Salomon reminds us of the cultural role this method of criticism plays. It is not the property of an isolated group but an instance of a cultural process of criticism. It is not simply the sporadic diversion of the experimental scientist cloistered in his laboratory but the most refined development of the continuing historical process of reconstruction which bridges the gap between the present and the past.

This does not mean, of course, that progress is inevitable, or that it is a pattern of wholesale improvement to be found in all areas. It means, however, that where and when we have knowledge we also have progress. Moreover, the sociological fact of progress may itself serve as the standard in relation to which

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further developments may be measured. History is in part the record of a persistent process of criticism, of which the scientific method is simply the most developed expression, through which the materials received from the past are reconstructed in the light of new experience. The very constancy of this process affords a standard by which progress may be measured. Nor should we be surprised that progress is measured in relation to a living process which is itself in flux: the natural sciences do not measure change in terms of a fixed goal but inquire rather into the relationship of one change to another.

In the last analysis relativism is untenable because it overlooks the fact that our society possesses a critical habit of thought from which it derives the power to learn from experience; and that this habit of thought, when it commands the common allegiance of a group, becomes a shared morality that governs behavior. Similarly, the impasse of absolutism may be avoided. For the conception of progress that takes its point of departure from the nature of the experimental method substitutes for the fixity of ends the fluidity of means. Its measure is not the ends approached but rather the means employed. Are they appropriate to the particular problem at hand? Do they contribute to the extension of intelligence or do they operate to stop inquiry? The doctrine that the end justifies the means should properly be merely the critic's way of recognizing that the means justifies—that is, adjusts and makes fitting—a specific end.

We often hear nowadays the question, "Knowledge for what?" The suggestion that progress be measured in terms of means rather than in terms of ends may seem to be but a cynical reaffirmation of the preoccupation with routine that is so much a feature of our society. A conception of progress that does not take into account the "final" things of life may look at first like another illiberal product of an era of specialization.

The suggestion, however, that progress be measured in relation to means rather than in relation to ends does not evade consideration, for example, of the tragic use our times have made of the results of scientific effort. But it does throw the

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problem into a perspective from which it seems somewhat more likely that it can be handled effectively. From this point of view the problem of putting the results of science to "good" instead of to "bad" use, to "progressive" instead of to "retrogressive" effect, is the problem of assuring that the new powers granted us by science be used in ways more commensurate with the method—the morals—of science. For within the sphere of science it is perfectly plain what knowledge is "for." Knowledge is a means to the opening up of further fields of investigation. It is a program to extend intelligent habits of behavior.

Progress, in other words, has as an end still further progress. It seeks the use of the present and living body of knowledge (the result of past progress) in relation to ends that are also the considered fruits of inquiry. This entails the extension of intelligent behavior in two directions: first, the increasing employment of the method of science in dealing with problems that have previously been treated in routine or impulsive ways; second, the enlargement of the method of science into the shared morality of an ever larger number of persons—not for the sake of a presumed intrinsic validity that may attach to the notion of the greatest good of the greatest number but because the enterprise of progress thrives upon the greatest possible interplay of ideas.

In this light a belief in progress is neither a faith in ultimate redemption nor a hang-over from the days when we believed in a benevolent Providence. Progress is instead a fact to be met with reflection. It poses a problem that is not so much the abstract one of definition as the practical one of reconstruction. For the progressive method of criticism is something extraordinarily disruptive of our customary habits of behavior, and men are likely to fall back upon the relativism of momentary impulse when the absolutes of convention and routine break down. This danger can be met only by still more progress—by the intervention of a developing method of action, disciplined rather than capricious, and creative rather than humdrum.

The belief that progress entails the approach to some final

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goal is widespread. Witness the perennial and, in recent times, the frequent complaint that progress is not interesting and the suggestion, increasingly fashionable, that progress is too expensive for our present limited budget. In the last analysis, the conviction that progress is the journey toward a definite destination reduces it (in Mr. G. M. Young's felicitous phrase) "from an aspiration to a schedule." The alternative is to measure progress in terms of a day-by-day adventure—in relation to means that are intrinsically delightful and to ends that are the means to further enrichments of experience. The alternative to judging progress in terms of some future reward is to judge it in terms of the satisfactions that go with it as a way of everyday life.

We are, in other words, progressing when we pass from the level on which our emotions are without direction and our intelligence without warmth to the level on which we work with joy and with effect. This level on which means and ends are integrated—the level characterized by *form*—is the level upon which artistic enterprise proceeds. There is a sense in which progress may be said to be that continuing process of realizing forms which is characteristic of the life of art. Progress bears the accent of poetry as well as the promise of power.

The conviction that poetry and power are incompatible is generated and sustained by a society in which power is callous and poetry is the diversion of a leisure class. The definition of progress that would separate science and art, means and ends, is evidence of the fact that the scientific habit of thought has not fully penetrated the workaday world. The hysterical plea that we sacrifice a goodly part of our organized intelligence in order to meet the fascist threat of organized power is a symptom of this deep-lying schism in our culture. But we only intensify our cultural dualism when we assert that because the Nazis have so greatly outdistanced us in gaining power, we must give up poetry to catch up with them. Certainly in a time when the best in our lives is threatened the issue of progress is anything but idle. For progress is precisely that quality exhibited by our lives when they are most vividly and most memorably efficient.

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China and the Democratic Way

ARTHUR W. HUMMEL

WE HAVE often been told that the Chinese in their present epic struggle are fighting the battle of the democracies. Though most Americans concur in this statement they are not likely to agree on the sense in which it is to be understood or what qualifications, if any, are necessary. What has this ancient, loosely-organized state in common with us? What values in their culture are they fighting to preserve, which at the same time are relevant to us? Are there substantial grounds for mutual understanding that we ought to cultivate? In so far as we are failing in this how can we rectify our mistakes?

To answer these questions we must go back if we can to the basic concepts on which a democratic society rests. If we think of democracy, as we so often do, in terms of a system of government or a political technique we are thinking of the means and not of the ends. These means, these techniques, the Chinese will doubtless in due time invent or acquire. When we apply the word democracy to them we must ask about the kind of personality they hope to create, the truths about man they have been passionately concerned to defend. We must consider, in other words, their views of the worth and dignity of man, their modes of personal intercourse and the kind of society they wish to establish.

The dominant ideas that have determined the nature of Chinese civilization through the years were formulated in a period of great social and political turmoil between the 6th and 3d centuries B. C. Not one but many ethical and political philosophers set forth their views at that time, and all sought public and official approval. Virtually every social point of view that Western thinkers have entertained since the days of Plato and

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Aristotle had some protagonists in China during that early period or some interpreter in later centuries. By the Confucianists the individual was urged to dedicate himself to great social ends, beginning with the family and reaching out to the world; and by the Taoists he was advised to walk in Nature's Way and "just amuse himself with the variety of opinions and not quarrel with them." To balance and evaluate these and other rival claims a high degree of tolerance and mental flexibility was required of the thinkers and teachers of that day. Likewise every man who later read or heard of their views or who tried to put them into practice had to exercise some of this same tolerance, this same interpretative skill.

One of the problems engrossing thinkers at that time, particularly the philosopher Mencius, was the right to revolt against the established government. Once, while discussing an episode in history, he was asked whether a minister might ever put his sovereign to death. He replied, in language which necessarily had to be evasive if the question were to be answered at all, that the king referred to had outraged benevolence and righteousness and that when he was put to death it was "a robber and a ruffian" and not a ruler who had died. "The people," said Mencius on another occasion, "are the most important element in a nation; the spirits of the land and grain are next; the sovereign is the lightest." Mencius and his contemporaries were saying, through the medium of these and many other remarks of a similar tenor, that the ruler is the servant and not the master of the people. This thought—that the people are strong and the sovereign is weak—the Chinese have often liked to express in the quaint words of their ancient chronicle, the *Tso-chuan*, "The tail is large and cannot be wagged."

The surprising thing is that these revolutionary utterances and many like them could survive through more than twenty centuries of monarchial rule, and that the classics containing them should have been used in the competitive civil service examinations for the selection of government officials. There were protests in high places, of course—as when the first Ming

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emperor (himself oddly enough a commoner) in 1394 ordered an edition of the *Book of Mencius* with 85 "extravagant statements" expunged. But the climate of thought was against him, his text gained no credence, and students were soon examined, as before, on the entire work.

Just as democracy in the West received its great impetus from the Christian conception of personality, so Chinese society —always intent on discovering ways to help men get along together—was animated by great precepts concerning the dignity and worth of man, precepts their most fearless thinkers enunciated in the early years of their history. These thinkers were anxious on the one hand to neutralize and render inert the autocratic power of their rulers, and on the other to preserve what order and justice they could in a feudal system then visibly dissolving in violence and bloodshed. Their aim was to develop a society of self-respecting, self-directing and self-acting men who though owing allegiance to their rulers would ask very little of them and in every essential matter would be their own masters. "You can rob an army of its general," said Confucius, "but you cannot rob even a common man of his will." The truly great man, said Mencius, is one who "is unswayed by the power of riches and honor, who accepts poverty and a humble lot without swerving from principle, and who refuses to bend to the menace of power and force." Mo Ti, advocate in the 4th century B. C. of universal love "without partiality," argued that to test the utility or worth of anything one should appeal "to the sense of hearing and seeing of the common people."

Following the collapse of feudalism in 255 B. C. China was schooled in some fifty years of totalitarian control, comparable in ruthlessness to what she and the ravaged nations of Europe are experiencing today. Under this regime China was, it is true, for the first time unified, but the harshness of the methods employed left an indelible impression on the people's memory. Every normal interest was subordinated to the state or to military necessity. Government by deception, by espionage and by expediency was openly and shamelessly advocated. Talented

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men, priding themselves on their "realism," abused their talents to write learned treatises on how to govern along these lines. Their disquisitions have survived through the centuries, thus affording students a long time to read, to digest and to remember them.

With the rise of a new and less oppressive dynasty, the Han, in 206 B.C. scholars with Confucian leanings made their way into positions of responsibility. Histories and the classics, which had been banned, were taken from their places of hiding and officially designated for study. The great sayings testifying to the primacy of human values and to the worth of a life based on good faith and reason became commonplaces of thought, though their meanings were at times distorted and their teachings were by no means always observed. The people were still subject to the caprice inherent in government by men rather than by law; nevertheless from this time onward they had powerful literary and social sanctions by which they could neutralize oppressive power and maintain a high degree of self-respect.

Beginning in the year 165 A.D. knowledge of the classics was required for selection to government offices. After the 6th century, moreover, civil service examinations were open to all competitors alike. From that time on, except for a few decades under Mongol rule in the 13th century, the son of the humblest artisan or farmer could, and did, rise to the highest posts in the empire. This continued to be true until 1905 when examinations gave place to modernized schools. Owing in part to the competitive system, class distinctions were almost entirely erased and the whole social structure of society was democratized. Since the highest offices were thus continually filled from below, there was no room for a self-perpetuating aristocracy. The changes brought about in Chinese life—more fundamental than popular writers have led us to believe—could not be imposed from above; they could be effected only with the consent of the people as a whole. Fully alive to this fact, Chinese magistrates, in posting their decrees, took pains to give the reasons for

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their observance. They were dealing with a people who could be persuaded but could not easily be regimented.

There runs through Chinese thinking a high degree of common sense and sanity, a strain of rational skepticism which has often saved them from the hazards of blind credulity on the one hand and from irrational excesses on the other. This is not the skepticism that ends in irresolution; it is the mentality that is wary of dogma and cannot long be deceived by magic or superstition or philosophies alien to a naturalistic tradition. After a long, futile attempt to comprehend the subtleties of Buddhist metaphysics, the Chinese dispensed with one mystery after another until—in the Ch'an (Zen) sect at least—the believer was left with little more than his native intelligence, his own inner light. Those features in Buddhist philosophy that seemed to the scholars to fill a deep human need they finally professed to find, in essence at least, in their own classical texts.

The respect accorded this skepticism, its firmly-established position, were brought to notice recently by His Excellency, the Chinese Ambassador, Dr. Hu Shih, when he placed some family papers on temporary deposit in the Library of Congress—in particular certain notebooks kept by his father as a student in the Lung Mên Academy, Shanghai, late in the 1850s. The thing that most impressed the Ambassador about these books—which had been handed out in blank form to all the students in the Academy—was the motto the authorities had printed at the top of each page. There, where no student could fail to see them, were the words:

> Your first task in studying anything is to approach the subject in a spirit of doubt; and your next is to find out for yourself what the meaning is. The great teacher, Chang Tsai [1020-1077 A.D.], used to say, "If you can doubt at points where other people feel no impulse to doubt, then you are making progress." He also said, "As your mind is thus opened to new truth, it is well to put the facts at once on paper; for unless you meditate on them, your mind will get clogged up again."

A people with such a tradition will not be blinkered by the

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bogey of "dangerous thoughts" or by race myths inimical to the peace of the world. The Chinese are not unacquainted with religious persecution; they have had emperors who placed certain types of literature under the ban; and they have had leaders who for political ends favored narrow and unfruitful interpretations of the classics. But their essentially liberal tradition has never been wholly extinguished. After the Han period, at least, the government maintained a body of censors whose business it was to report on anything wrong in governmental administration and to criticize officials, including the emperor. Though these censors were on occasion persecuted for their plain-spoken utterances they were highly respected and were ordinarily given a free rein. In the field of scholarship the adherents of the different philosophical schools freely criticized one another. Literary critics, moreover, could discuss without hindrance the spuriousness of highly venerated texts. In the past half century this free criticism has extended to every phase of the national heritage—no belief, no custom and no institution was so sacred as to be exempt. If enlightened skepticism is essential in a people who wish to maintain their liberties, the Chinese may be said to have it.

It is one of the characteristics of a democratic society that though it can strive for great ends it must always disclaim any ability to formulate an ultimate truth. To function democratically it must assume it is not yet democratic enough, that there is still more to achieve. If at any time it supposes itself to have discovered a finality, at that very moment inertia has set in—the people can relinquish their responsibility and the dictator can have his way. Because the Chinese have so little faith in ultimate views they did not take to the pan-Asian dream of recent years. For the same reason they silently permitted one misguided warlord after another to pass into oblivion. They needed the cohesion and patriotism that commitment to a shining goal would have given them, but they were also spared the frustration following non-attainment and, worse still, the cynicism and disillusionment which paralyze useful activity.

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Though they accept the fact that absolute knowledge is unattainable in a world of uncertainty, this in no way prevents them from committing themselves to ideal objectives or from finding enjoyment in the pursuit. They hold that there is sufficient good to be found in the activity itself and that success or failure can be left to fate. Perhaps the highest tribute ever paid to Confucius by a contemporary was the assertion that "though he knew he could not succeed, he still kept on trying."

The Chinese doubtless have their own fixed ideas but they manage rather successfully to conceal them, giving the impression of a people more concerned to search for the truth than to claim possession of it. Searching for the truth, or the right way, in human relations obviously means thinking of people as being in relation. "The west side of my house is the east side of my neighbor's house," said the 18th-century historian, Ts'ui Shu, quoting a proverb current in his day. It was a truth enunciated by the Taoists many centuries earlier. Insight and skill in human affairs is analogous to the skill we use daily in the right interpretation of music and art and poetry. The same quick understanding, the same tactful handling of involved relations is required in both. A too strict application of a principle in human relations, a failure to take into account the special circumstances modifying a given case, is like the attempt to interpret the meaning of a word apart from its context.

"All life comes back," said Henry James, "to the question of our relations with one another." Because the Chinese have always believed this to be true, the study of their culture becomes in large part the study of a way of life. They have by no means mastered the art of living but they have certainly spent more time and thought on it than any other people. Nearly all their classics and novels made it their primary concern; even their histories professed to teach, or were believed by their readers to teach, some moral lesson. The common people have such a rich store of proverbs in this field that many a Westerner acquainted with Chinese thought, when he feels the need for a really pertinent maxim, reaches out for an old Chinese

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aphorism because, like the multiplication table, it seems to go back to first principles. Preoccupied as they were with human problems, the Chinese took comparatively little interest in any purely intellectual quest or in the arrival at abstract truth by a set of logical propositions. They paid rather dearly for this, to be sure, in the tardy development of the physical and applied sciences; but they gained a heightened awareness in other fields which, for the future of mankind, may be equally important.

A disciple of Confucius summed up the Master's teachings in two words signifying *loyalty* to self and *mutuality* in dealing with others. When he was asked whether his teachings might be expressed in one word he replied, "Surely the word *mutuality* is such." "Be inwardly square, but outwardly round," says the proverb; hold fast, if you wish, to the long aim but in carrying it out present as few sharp corners as possible. "In everything let there be standing room"—make it possible for the offender to keep his self-respect and resume his place in society. "Don't injure friendly feelings face to face"—there is a duty not only to tell the truth but to make it palatable. Don't press matters to a final brutal conclusion; disregard trifles and yield to the prejudices of others. Don't put yourself in the wrong through impatience and contempt. "He who has reason on his side need not speak in a loud voice"—a proverb much admired by Robert Morrison, the first Protestant missionary to China.

There are obvious dangers in some of these counsels for, like all delicately poised things, they can be pushed to extremes. This the Chinese have on occasion done. But finalities have their dangers too, for behind every finality there lurks an assumption of omniscience, a claim easily perverted into a bid for unrestricted control. The Chinese have had ample occasion to observe in their own history, and in the sufferings they are now enduring, the calamities a people with "divine missions" and "immutable policies" can inflict on the world. They have demonstrated that a people holding their humane views can also rise, when necessary, to the defense of these views.

Curiously enough we can expect but little help from the

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Chinese in making these concepts known in the West. They regard them as axiomatic and therefore see no reason to argue for them. It is both the strength and the weakness of their position that they take little interest in propagandizing, even for their own cause. Rightly or wrongly, they believe that each of the world's cultural groups will get on best if it lets the other choose what it wants. Acting on the assumption that "a good drum does not need a heavy stick" they are more concerned to understand others than to change them—a thought which Confucius expressed in the words, "I do not grieve that men do not know me; I will grieve that I do not know men."

We can go a long way toward an understanding of the Chinese way of life if we dismiss from our thoughts any remaining traces of the obfuscating notion that the people are in some degree enigmatical or inscrutable. This is to create bogeys where none exist. "It is easy to paint a goblin," said the 17th-century philosopher, Yen Yüan, "but it is hard to paint a horse." In the world of goblins, one man's picture is as good as another's; but in the world of real things, fidelity to fact is important. In truth, we see in China a people with whom we have more in common than with some nations of Europe or even of South America. We live in analogous great geographical areas on opposite sides of the world; we have much the same plant life from which we can both draw to our mutual advantage; we have similar practicality, a similar sense of humor and a like passionate faith in education; finally, we have in common our socially democratic ways.

The world situation demands of us that some of the adjustments which the Chinese, and other nations of Eastern Asia, have had to make—with many misgivings and some loss of pride—we too must make. "You can build a cart indoors," says the Chinese proverb, "but when you take it out on the road it will have to follow the ruts." We surely cannot proceed on the assumption that all the important adjustments will be made by others and that we need make only the minor ones; or that the Orientals will one day all speak our language and think our

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thoughts and that we shall then not need to trouble about theirs. They are, indeed, learning our language—English has long been taught in all the lower and higher schools of the East and many Chinese who have never been out of their country speak it with great ease. They thus have the keys to unlock two cultures, their own and ours; they have facilities for making comparisons which we, limited to one tradition, do not possess. Some twenty centuries ago the Chinese strategist, Sun-tzŭ, uttered a warning still applicable to any one who can view such a state of affairs with complacency. "If you know both yourself and your opponent you need not fear defeat in a hundred encounters; if you know only yourself but not your opponent you will lose once for every time you win; if you know neither yourself nor your opponent you will lose every time."

"Wherever men have lived," said Thoreau, "there is a story to be told." Where, indeed, have one race of men lived together longer or written a better documented story than in China? Yet one can scarcely claim that the history departments of our universities are alive to this fact. They devote a semester or a year to one brief episode of European history whereas they try to crowd the four millennia of China into a course lasting a few weeks. This is what the Chinese call "looking at the leopard through a bamboo tube" and seeing only one spot. We encourage specialists to provide us with ever more detailed guides to the civilizations of the ancient Mediterranean world while we have at our disposal only the most elementary tools for understanding the living cultures of India, China and Japan. Our students remain largely uninformed about the powerful rejuvenating forces at work in those lands, as reflected in art and literature. Even political events they cannot view discriminatingly because the names of the participants and the cultural background mean so little to them. The Chinese language opens to the reader one of the richest literatures of the world. It is worth studying if for no other reason than that it differs so greatly from the languages we know. Its uninflected, ideographic structure forces the reader to think about language

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from a wholly new point of view. The same can be said for the study of Chinese art. Here, at last, we have a form of esthetic expression which unlike our own we can approach unhampered by a great weight of tradition to guide our opinion—we don't have to say we like it if we don't. Our critical sense is sharpened; we are able to return to our own art, the objects we have been told we ought to like, with a new detachment and freedom.

It is important at this juncture in world affairs to be on guard against what the philosopher, A. N. Whitehead, calls "dogmatism as to patterns of connection." We should not become so conditioned in our scientific observation, in our religious and social outlook, or even in our democratic ways, that we are blind to possible alternatives. We lightly assume that the patterns we have made, or inherited, are part of the nature of things, forgetting that they were constructed by the mind for specific purposes and can be reconstructed to suit broader purposes as these come into view. The emergence on the world's stage of people with other habits and other points of view is not a menace; it is a positive opportunity. As some of our prophets of doom have done, we can interpret the increasing interpenetration of cultures as pointing to the beginning of the end of Western civilization; or we can see in it the possibility of a richer and more varied life for mankind. Minds flexible enough to make the new comparisons, the new parallels which the interpenetration of cultures makes possible, will not feel they are losing anything in the process. They are confronted by what Shelley termed "a thousand unapprehended combinations." New insights, new perspectives and new refinements in thought and feeling can be theirs.

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Psychotherapy—A Modern Medical Science

LEWELLYS F. BARKER

FROM very early times attempts to help the ailing through mental treatments of one kind or another were made by physicians and others but such treatments were merely empirical. Today, thanks to many scientific studies, especially those carried out in the present century, they have a much more rational basis. Curative efforts of this kind lie in the modern scientific field of psychotherapy.

Various forms of mental treatment are employed by psychotherapists, the particular form to be applied depending upon the special needs of the individual. Among the more important forms are (1) suggestion, including hypnotism; (2) persuasion, or medical moralization; (3) rest and isolation, the Weir Mitchell method; (4) mental liquidation or catharsis, including the different forms of psychoanalysis; and (5) education, excitation, guidance and work directed toward the making of new psychological acquisitions or toward the recuperation of powers that have been diminished.

Suggestion makes use of what has been called the patient's "automatism." Physicians often apply it consciously to their patients, for they know that persons having confidence in their doctors are frequently willing to accept their statements and suggestions more or less uncritically. Even when not consciously employed, suggestion is often responsible for some of the beneficial effects of medical treatment. If a patient believes he will be helped by a certain therapeutic measure (a prescription, an operation, electrical treatments, massage) and is better after it has been applied, the improvement is not always due to direct chemical or physical effects upon the body but may be

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the result of the suggestive influence exerted by the therapeutic measure—in which event faith in the measure was responsible for the improvement. Some persons are very susceptible to suggestion whereas others are especially resistant to it; accordingly we can speak of "positive suggestibility" and of "negative suggestibility." Suggestions made to patients in a state of induced somnambulism (hypnotism) are sometimes peculiarly effective. Hypnotism was formerly resorted to more frequently than at present. When applied by physicians skilful in its use it can be a really important practical method of psychotherapy.

Persuasion (or *medical moralization*), advocated in 1904 by the Swiss physician, P. Dubois, as a valuable psychotherapeutic method, has been employed in many countries, especially in Switzerland, France and the United States. Dubois was opposed to the use of suggestion, preferring to rely upon encouraging conversations, upon reasoning with the patients and upon "moral suasion." As a matter of fact suggestion played a large role in the method, for the patients were told that their symptoms were caused by functional rather than organic disease and that functional symptoms (such as fatigability, insomnia, anxiety, headache and other distressing sensations) were to be ignored since they depended, as Dubois said, upon false ideas and bad mental habits. He maintained that notions of disease should be replaced by "sublime philosophical thoughts" and insisted that the mind had power over the body and that the human will was quite free. A modification of this method known as the "Emmanuel Movement" became, for a few years during the first decade of this century, popular in Boston where physicians like R. C. Cabot and clergymen like E. L. Worcester cooperated in practicing psychotherapy by persuasion.

Rest and isolation cures (following the methods of Weir Mitchell, of Philadelphia) are still regarded as having great value for nervous patients who complain of fatigue and exhaustion, particularly if they are undernourished. The patient is placed in a hospital or nursing home, remains in bed for several weeks under the care of trained nurses and for a few

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days is kept on a milk diet. Thereafter, until weight becomes normal, he is given as much food as he can digest. If a patient lacks appetite or finds it difficult to assimilate food he is given injections of protamine zinc insulin twice daily for a time, though the use of insulin was not a part of the original Weir Mitchell treatment. The patient does not receive visits or letters from members of his family during the early part of the treatment, though the physician promises that if anything goes wrong at home the patient will be promptly told. "Isolation" of the patient helps to enforce repose of both body and mind and nervous energy is economized. Usually, when rest is supplemented by massage, encouraging conversations and a general building up of the body, symptoms diminish and may after a time wholly disappear. During convalescence the physician in attendance gradually re-educates the patient to become competent to lead a more nearly normal life, although the daily schedule may have to be somewhat simpler than it had been before the illness. During the period of rest and isolation clues to familial or social conflicts are sought and attempts are made to resolve them.

Psychotherapy by *mental liquidation* or *catharsis* (especially by *psychoanalysis*) attained to considerable vogue under the influence of Sigmund Freud. Freud believed that the symptoms of many nervous patients are dependent upon mental conflicts they cannot of themselves resolve—conflicts of which they are often unaware. He was convinced that such conflicts must be uncovered if the patient is to understand what they really are and learn how to handle them. To uncover them Freud used what he called the method of "free association," the patient in regular interviews stating whatever came into the mind, whether this seemed to be sense or nonsense and whether it was "conventional" or "objectionable." It was found desirable to lead the patient to develop a personal liking for the analyst ("positive transfer") if the analysis was to be helpful. Through such conversations the psychoanalyst gained clues to the content of the deeper layers of the patient's psychic life;

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hidden emotional conflicts were gradually revealed and could then be explained to the patient.

Freud himself laid great stress upon emotional life in infancy and thought that infantile sexual impulses and experiences, including over-devotion to the parent of the opposite sex ("Oedipus complex"), were of great importance for the functioning of the nervous system in later life, many nervous symptoms being, he thought, unconscious derivatives from such infantile sexuality. The dreams of adults were studied for clues to earlier experiences that had been repressed and the interpretation of dreams as "wish fulfilments" became an important part of the work of the psychoanalyst, since the contents of dreams were looked upon as "symbols" of "unconscious dream-thoughts." The capricious interpretation of such symbols by some psychoanalysts has been the subject of much criticism. Fortunately the abler psychoanalysts in this country (especially F. Alexander, Karl Menninger and L. S. Kubie) have done much to purge psychoanalytic theory of many of its earlier extravagances.

In addition to Freud's so-called orthodox psychoanalysis, other more or less similar methods have been employed by various analytical psychologists. Among these may be singled out for special mention Janet's method of "psychological analysis," Adler's method of "individual psychology" which laid emphasis upon the "will-to-power" and upon the "inferiority complex," and Jung's "analytical psychology" with its division of human types into "introverts" and "extroverts."

Adolf Meyer and his school studied and tried to correct personality difficulties on a psychobiological basis; the various factors and situations concerned in the origin of the patient's symptoms were analyzed and efforts were thereafter made to achieve a satisfactory integration of the whole personality; and in the study and treatment of patients all methods that could be helpful were made use of. "Deep" psychological analysis was found to be necessary in only a small proportion of the cases.

Through *education*, *excitation*, *guidance* and *work programs*

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psychotherapists are often able to increase the psychic income of their patients through restoration or acquisition of psychic capital. New forms of helpful activity may be learned; powers that have been lost may be regained; self-confidence may be increased; ability to deal with difficulties of personality and situation may be enhanced.

Undoubtedly medicine is greatly indebted to psychoanalysis, especially for its emphasis upon the whole life history of the human personality. It has been valuable both as an instrument of research and as a therapeutic method.

Psychotherapy's major field is that of the functional nervous disorders (such as neurasthenia, hysteria, anxiety neurosis and psychasthenia) but psychotherapy may also be helpful in the treatment of so-called organic diseases. This does not imply that psychotherapy can be effective in removing the structural changes in the body resulting from organic disease. But, keeping in mind the inseparable unity of structures and functions, of physical and mental processes, and remembering that the behavior of any person represents the totality of his outward reactions as a living being, the psychotherapist tries to understand how patients (as whole personalities) react to their illnesses (organic as well as functional) and sees to it that no influence that may be of benefit is neglected. Coronary sclerosis with angina pectoris, and pulmonary tuberculosis may be mentioned as examples of organic diseases in which psychotherapy can be a valuable adjuvant to physical therapy.

The problems of the psychotherapist vary with patients of different ages.

During childhood parents and physicians have unusual opportunities for the practice of "mental hygiene." Intelligent parents who learn to understand and to manage ably the difficulties of their children should be classed among our more important psychotherapists. Small volumes giving instruction on how to keep a child normal in mind and morals are now available but when difficult problems arise parents should seek the aid of a family physician, a pediatrician or, in graver cases, a

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psychiatrist. It may be necessary to modify the child himself by improvement of general health, to modify the attitudes of parents for the child's benefit or to make other advantageous changes in the total situation (school, playmates, community). Such diverse faulty habits as thumb-sucking, nail-biting, stuttering, tics, or habit-spasms, sleepwalking, bed-wetting, temper-tantrums and jealousy reactions should be approached as problems to be solved rather than as habits to be automatically dealt with by disciplinary measures.

During adolescence dependence upon the family should undergo gradual diminution in order that when adulthood is reached the world may be faced in an independent manner. One of the parent-child relationships to be avoided is an abnormal fixation of love impulses upon father or mother. Parents should teach young people how to use money by allowing them gradually increasing sums monthly that will permit them to make purchases for their own needs. As adolescence progresses parental authority should be gradually relaxed to give sons and daughters an opportunity steadily to develop their powers of self-regulation and self-direction and to become ever more self-confident. Over-strictness on the one hand and over-indulgence on the other are errors that parents should sedulously avoid.

During early adulthood the psychotherapist may be called upon for advice by the unmarried or by the married. Spinsterhood and bachelorhood have their especial problems and marital unhappiness is all too common. Maladaptation in marriage may be due to any one of many different causes, each of which may demand a different kind of intervention by the medical practitioner called upon for aid. The first year of marriage often reveals problems in mutual adjustment that are more difficult than either man or woman had previously suspected. Later on, questions of birth-control may arise or childless couples may wish advice about the adoption of one or more children. The problems connected with the sex-life of adults are manifold. The psychotherapist may need to use great understanding and

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tact, however, if he is to discover even the existence of these disturbing factors, and again when he must decide how they may best be resolved. Homosexuality is far more common than many people realize. Sadistic and masochistic impulses, too, are sexual abnormalities that may test the powers of treatment of the most skilful psychotherapist.

During later life and in old age the problems that confront the psychotherapist are very different from those of earlier life—an emphasis laid by G. Lawton in his article "Mental Hygiene at Senescence."[1] After 60 the demands made upon body and mind should be gradually diminished. Working hours should be lessened, time devoted to rest and recreation increased, moderation in the use of food and drink enjoined, strenuous outdoor exercise ought to give place to milder forms and responsibilities gradually delegated to others. The time for retirement is, or at least should be, an individual and personal matter, not subject to hard-and-fast rules, for some men are more capable at 75 than others at 60. Sudden and marked reduction of activities is all too likely to be harmful; the reduction should whenever possible be gradual. As business or professional activities are relinquished the older person may devote more time to hobbies and to various altruistic, social or literary interests as substitutes; older men will often do well to write their own autobiographies, even if they are not to be published. Loneliness in later life is to be avoided as is any tendency to narrow the horizon of one's interests to the immediate environment. Older women are fortunate when they have young grandchildren they may enjoy. The wise old person will wish to live on as long as he can be really useful to the world, but he will also prefer not to linger in a state of physical and intellectual decay with incapacitation; he should know that in any case death cannot be far away and that this fact should be accepted philosophically and without fear.

[1] *Mental Hygiene*, Vol. 23, No. 2, pp. 257-267, April 1939.

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Should Scholars Try to Think?

DELANCEY FERGUSON

CALL a literary scholar dull and he may take it as proof that he has not stooped to the wiles of the journalist and popularizer. Call him a pedant and he may only smile pityingly at your failure to appreciate scholarly precision. But tell him his imagination is faulty and he will stare in honest bewilderment. His concern, he will reply, is with facts and their interpretation; imagination has nothing to do with it. But it has.

More conscientious, intelligent effort, backed by the facilities of the greatest libraries the world has ever known, is directed today to collecting and arranging facts than ever before in the history of literary research. We have more facts than ever and we are continually adding to the stock. But what we do with them after we get them depends on our imagination. We may not have enough; we may have too much, of the wrong sort. Either way we are pretty certain, by distorting our subject, to distort life.

Lack of imagination may be revealed anywhere from the interpretation of details to the broadest synthesis of a topic. The scholar has his facts but he either doesn't know what they mean or fails to communicate his knowledge. Take a trifling example. Almost any account of Emerson's life mentions that he asked his second wife to change her name from Lydia to Lidian because the latter was more euphonious. But nobody explains why, though not all the English-speaking world lives "down East." Outside New England many people find "Lydia Emerson" no harsher than "Lidian Emerson" or "Lydia Jackson." But when we realize that at marriage Lydia Jackson became, for most of her friends and neighbors, Lydiar Remerson, we suddenly perceive more than a whim behind her husband's request. I have no wish to urge the elevation of the already lofty mountains of

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footnotes adorning our classic texts; I only point out that sometimes editors seem unaware that notes are needed.

But lack of imagination becomes more serious when it prevents the scholar from understanding the implications of what he reports. My own study of Burns revealed repeated instances of failure to state the most obvious facts about the poet's friends, especially if the friends were gentry. You will seek vainly in most biographies for an admission that John Murdoch, the poet's schoolmaster, and the Reverend Josiah Walker, an early biographer, were pedantic asses; that Mrs. Dunlop, his patroness, was a bore and Robert Riddell, another friend and patron, was an intellectual bluffer. The interposition of the printed word benumbs the biographers' imagination and keeps them from recognizing in Burns's acquaintances the traits they would quickly condemn among their own. Because Murdoch and Walker, Riddell and Mrs. Dunlop, were witnesses and contributed source documents their human qualities are overlooked.

Such failure to define traits strikes deeper than mere pulling of punches in characterization. Life is the intercourse of personalities: if the interlocutors are not plainly seen the central figure loses the innumerable points of illumination reflected upon him from his friends and acquaintances. The biographer's task is to visualize his scene and keep the spotlight fixed on his central character without dimming the footlights so much that the other actors are obscured. He must, moreover, have imagination enough to maintain bifocal vision—to see simultaneously his hero as the perspective of history has established him and as he appeared to his contemporaries and associates. It is here that the scholar most often breaks down. He has at hand so many facts about his hero and feels they are so important that he loses sight of everyone else on the stage. I can remember, for example, no scholarly study of a major romantic poet—one *we* consider major—that gives an adequate impression of the places which Rogers, Moore, Campbell and Sir Walter Scott actually held in the world of poetry between 1800 and 1820. Colleagues tell me that Frances Winwar's *Poor Splendid*

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Wings is full of inaccuracies yet Miss Winwar did what so many scholars fail to do: she made her readers feel the pre-Raphaelite men and women as a related group in a real society and not as stuffed figures in glass cases. Scholarly biography—of course with luminous exceptions—is at about the same stage that museums of natural history had reached a generation ago. The old-time museum put its stuffed birds and mammals in shallow cases ranged along the wall; the modern museum arranges them in habitat groups.

Yet habitat grouping also has its perils. If too much background is used the inhabitants are lost in the foliage. Whenever I read some of the currently fashionable studies of the history of ideas I almost begin to believe that people two centuries ago spent their time murmuring words like plenitude, primitivism and natural religion. They didn't, any more than the Greeks went about saying "nothing in excess" or "know thyself." The men of the 18th century played with all the ideas, true or false, that were current, as the 19th century played with its ideas of progress and evolution. But men don't live by these ideas. They are merely part of the furniture of our mental parlors and are dusted and displayed only on ceremonial occasions. What makes an idea important is not the idea itself but the men who believe it and, above all, the abiding artistry of the forms in which they express it. Primitivism happened to appeal, among others, to a great artist named Rousseau; plenitude was one of the many ideas in the nimble mind of another artist named Pope. The ideas are of moment because of the artists who expressed them.

In the 17th century the debate over infant baptism versus adult baptism stirred many more people, and resulted in far more persecution and bloodshed, than did Milton's views on divorce or the tenure of kings and magistrates. But the Anabaptists lacked a great artist to make their ideas a vital thread in his work and accordingly our students of ideas pass quickly by a controversy which does not interest them. Certainly Rousseau's romantic primitivism played its part in Europe's, and especially France's, attitude toward the American Revolution. But another

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idea which also played its part gets little of the scholarly notice that primitivism has attracted. That was Buffon's glib assertion that European species deteriorate when transplanted to America. It had as much basis in fact as Rousseau's theory about the transcendent virtue of men in a state of nature—that is, it had none at all. Yet it helped convince some members of Parliament that the colonists couldn't possibly resist British troops and that America would have to continue to buy its woolen cloth from England because American sheep didn't grow enough wool.

In themselves all ideas are equally unimportant or equally important. Bishop Berkeley's faith in the therapeutic value of tarwater ought, if we are really studying ideas, to have its place along with Pope's faith that whatever is, is right. But we aren't really studying ideas; we are studying men, whether we admit it or not. The exposition of ideas is the footnoting of great texts to make clearer to the modern reader some of the mental background of the authors of the great texts. If we allow the ideas to crowd the author off the page we have betrayed our only real function as scholars—elucidation of the literature of the past.

"It is an axiom in law," said Rhadamanthus when the riot broke out in hell, "that however complicated an event may be, there can never be more than one person at the extreme bottom of it. Who is the person?" That judgment might guide us in our studies. The basis of our particular world of scholarship is literature and the basis of literature is the men who wrote it. Everything else, from the ideas the men expressed to the audiences they addressed, is peripheral to that main study. Yet some scholars have so little realized this elemental fact that in certain fields of literature they have wholly denied the existence of individual authors. Of all the fantastic ideas which came out of Germany in the pre-Hitler era, perhaps first place should go to the communal theory of ballad composition. There is, and has always been, such a thing as communal composition, if you mean by that the addition of new stanzas to old songs. There are hundreds of variant stanzas for "The Chisholm Trail," "Frankie and Johnnie," "Mademoiselle from Armentières" and other

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folk ditties. But none of these additions fits into a climactic narrative—a point missed by the communal theorists. The original few stanzas tell whatever story is to be found. The rest, the communal part, is all episodic embroidery. And to assert that a terse and complete narrative like "Barbara Allen" or "Sir Patrick Spens" could emerge from this chaos is to assert that a cake can emerge from the kitchen without the interposition of a cook.

Inability, because the original artist is nameless and forgotten, to visualize the necessity for his presence, was the root of that communal theory. It entailed a blithe disregard of all contemporary evidence about oral tradition, including—and this is where the lack of imagination comes in—the experience of everyone of us in trying to remember something once heard. We remember fragments, the high spots of the narrative; we miss connecting links and garble details of wording—which is precisely what happens to ballad texts as you follow "Barbara Allen," for example, from Scotland to Texas. If the communal theory is to be validated, instances must be adduced in which the text has improved in transmission. If such exist, Gummere and Kittredge are strangely silent about them.

And thus the lack of imagination, failure to visualize the past and to relate events to analogous happenings and people within our own experience, can lead the scholar astray on anything from minor details to an entire form of art. Yet too much imagination, of the wrong sort, is just as fruitful of error.

The further we go into the past the scantier become the details from which we try to reconstruct the biographies of great writers. The temptation to elaborate conjecture upon the few available facts is almost irresistible. The fewer the fixed points on a plane surface the easier to draw a pattern which will include them in a single coherent design. Now a fundamental design is necessary for any critical or biographical interpretation. The scholar, in writing about Chaucer, let us say, or Shakespeare, sets up a conjectural pattern which will include all the fixed points. He can accomplish nothing unless he does. But having set up the pattern he promptly forgets that it is

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conjectural and proceeds on the assumption that it is *the* explanation instead of what it really is—*an* explanation.

Some of the work of the two professors, John L. Hotson and the late John M. Manly, perfectly illustrates one point. The latter's *Some New Light on Chaucer* brings together a most illuminating mass of detail in illustration of the world in which Chaucer lived. The book reveals how typical a cross-section of 14th century English life Chaucer set forth in the *Canterbury Tales*. But Manly was not content to stop with illustration. He took the further, and perilous, step of identification. To learn that the Man of Law, for instance, represents a special, and highly selected, group of Sergeants at Law, men of substance and high repute, the aristocracy of their profession, is really to receive new light on the Pilgrims. But when Manly next examines the extant facts about all members of the English bar who were Sergeants at Law in Chaucer's time and announces that the Man of Law is in all likelihood a portrait of one Thomas Pynchbek he lets his imagination run away. The identification rests on some half a dozen points of resemblance.

Out of the thousands of details that make up a man's personality and environment, a half dozen of the most impersonal sort survive about Thomas Pynchbek. He bought numerous parcels of land; he had political connections with the Gloucester faction; he served assize; he lived not far from the Lincolnshire estates of Chaucer's sister-in-law; he once quarreled with Chaucer's friend, Sir William de Beauchamp. But such details tell us nothing about the man himself. Perhaps he was a slender, choleric man; perhaps he was lecherous as a sparrow. Neither trait need preclude success at the bar; and such traits, not ownership of land or service on the bench, are what the artist catches up from life and applies to the people of his imagination. But in such case Thomas Pynchbek would stand model for the Reeve or the Sumnour and not the Man of Law. Attempts at illustrating an author, carried to such lengths, do not elucidate; they obfuscate. The scholar has superposed his own creative imagination upon his author's.

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There is little difference between this sort of thing and the interpretations of Shakespeare that Edwin Arlington Robinson put forward in "Ben Jonson Entertains a Man from Stratford" and Kipling in "The Craftsman" and "Proofs of Holy Writ." These studies also spring from close and sympathetic analysis of the man's life, works and times; unlike Manly's and Hotson's they are cast in artistic form. Yet if we are seeking interpretations of a poet, it is narrowminded to scorn the commentaries of brother-poets while we glorify those of academicians.

Consider Hotson's *I, William Shakespeare, Do Appoint Thomas Russell, Esq.* No scholar of modern times has added more to our scanty stock of facts about Shakespeare. He has combined an inspired playing of hunches with the most indefatigable labor in plowing through heaps of obscure documents. But the playing of hunches which stands Hotson in such good stead in finding clues leads him to overplay his conclusions. It is important, said Pudd'n-head Wilson, "to get out of an experience only the wisdom that is in it—and stop there; lest we be like the cat that sits down on a hot stovelid. She will never sit down on a hot stovelid again—and that is well; but also she will never sit down on a cold one any more." Hotson constantly extends his conclusions from hot stovelids to cold ones, and from cold stovelids to pavingstones and doormats. He has unearthed a huge store of facts relating to scores of people who were, or may have been, Shakespeare's friends and neighbors; he will not forego the effort to link every fact in some way to the poet himself. Such a passage as this epitomizes the method:

> . . . It is likely, then, that William Shakespeare and Edward Bushnell wore the Stanley badge of the Eagle and Child as fellow-servants of Lord Strange.
>
> Suppose the likelihood a fact. What did Shakespeare's eye discern in his fellow-servant, this young gentleman and neighbor destined to be connected with him by the Shakespeare-Quiney-Bushnell marriages?

For one instance where Hotson avows such hypothetical reasoning there are many where he so reasons without the avowal. Thus Shakespeare *may* have linked the names of Rosencrantz

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and Guildenstern because they appear together on a contemporary engraving of Tycho Brahe. From that fact Hotson suggests that Shakespeare may have seen a copy of the engraving in the home of the scientist and astronomer, Thomas Digges, who may have been his personal friend (as his son, Leonard Digges, apparently was at a later date). It needs no blind fury with abhorred shears to slit such a thin-spun web. A single new fact could ruin the whole fabric. I have seen it happen.

It has long been known that Burns felt bitterly resentful toward the Dundas family, especially Henry Dundas, later Viscount Melville, who during the poet's manhood was the political boss of Scotland. In a letter to his friend Cunningham, written in 1791, Burns declared:

> I never see the name, Dundas, in the column of a newspaper, but my heart seems straitened from room in my bosom; and if I am obliged to read aloud a paragraph relating to one of them, I feel my forehead flush, and my nether lip quivers.

And this, he explained, was because Henry ignored the (very poor) elegy the poet had sent him on the death of Robert Dundas, Lord President of the Court of Session. As an explanation of such inveterate resentment, the cause seems disproportionate to the result.

So at least it seemed to Mrs. Carswell a decade ago when she was writing her life of Burns. In the printed text of one of the poet's many letters to Clarinda in January 1788 Mrs. Carswell found the following:

> I have almost given up the excise idea. I have been just now to wait on a great Person, Miss N's friend, ——. Why will Great people not only deafen us with the din of their equipage, and dazzle us with their fastidious pomp, but they must also be so very dictatorially wise? I have been question'd like a child about my matters, and blamed and schooled for my inscription on Stirling window. Come, Clarinda—"Come, curse me Jacob; come, defy me Israel!"

In a letter to me Mrs. Carswell conjectured that the blank name stood for Dundas. It was a very reasonable conjecture. Dundas being the dispenser of patronage, the poet might naturally have

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sought an interview to further his application for an excise commission. Though there was no evidence that Clarinda's friend, Miss Nimmo, was intimate with Dundas that need not vitiate the conjecture since Burns might only have meant that Miss Nimmo admired the politician. Filling the blank with Dundas' name would provide a dramatic, and more than adequate, reason for the intense feeling Burns expressed three years later. In fact I should have applauded the keenness of the guess—if I hadn't seen the original of the letter on which Mrs. Carswell was relying. There the name, discreetly left blank by the original editor, was given in full. "Miss N's friend, Mrs. Stewart." Who this Mrs. Stewart was no one has yet discovered. Like the nameless clergyman who asked Johnson's opinion of Dodd's sermons she pops into the narrative, and out again, without introduction and without factual posterity. Mrs. Carswell's conjecture, I repeat, was inherently reasonable. It did on a small scale with Burns what Manly and Hotson have done on a much larger scale with Chaucer and Shakespeare. It made a far more artistic narrative than the reality does. It is most unsatisfactory, it is bad art, to introduce an unexplained character who figures in only a single episode. But the unsatisfactory and inartistic thing happened to be the truth.

Too much imagination tempts the scholar to erect upon an exiguous foundation of facts a structure far too heavy for them to bear, a structure that a single additional fact will knock into ruins. And what is so readily and dangerously done in biography is done with still more peril in criticism.

Take Mrs. Emerson again. In a famous passage in his *Journal*, Emerson referred to her as "mine Asia." To Frederick Ives Carpenter the phrase symbolized Emerson's intense interest in Oriental philosophy. A once famous and wealthy kingdom in Asia Minor was called Lydia, and neither Professor Carpenter nor any other commentator has shown evidence compelling belief that in so describing his wife Emerson meant anything deeper than a mild geographical pun.

The literary criticism of the past couple of decades has widely

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extended this method. The left-wing critics, in particular, have made a formula of it. You read the works of the man you propose to interpret, and choose certain utterances which you announce as the keynotes of his life and writings. Usually of course these utterances fit into a theory you have already formed about the man or a philosophy you already hold. You then explain everything in terms of these symbolic phrases, ignoring or explaining away whatever fails to harmonize with them. Mr. Newton Arvin recently tried it with Walt Whitman.

Mr. Arvin is an ardent Socialist. Whenever one holds a creed intensely the impulse to seek support for it in one's favorite authors is almost irresistible. Nazis seek proof of Nordic supremacy in the pages of Shakespeare, Christians argue that Shelley was a Christian, and Mr. Arvin undertakes to show that Walt Whitman was really a good socialist. The task would have been easier had Mr. Arvin not been a good scholar also. As it is, the strain of the effort shows on almost every page. Mr. Arvin's starting-point is one of Walt's loose and garrulous remarks in his old age to the effect that perhaps he had been a good deal more of a socialist than he thought he was. Walt made the remark to Horace Traubel, a solemn disciple whom the good gray poet often labored to impress and whose leg, as in the instance of the mythical grandson, he sometimes delighted to pull. Almost abandoning the hopeless attempt to fit the flamboyant individualism of Whitman's verse into an orthodox Marxian pattern, Mr. Arvin concentrates on Walt's relations with the successive phases of social thought and doctrine in the later 19th century. Unfortunately the two lines—Walt and social doctrine—turn out to be parallel, and it is only in a sort of non-Euclidian space in Mr. Arvin's mind that they ever meet. Theoretically, because most of these movements and doctrines were widely publicized in the newspapers, Walt should have been familiar with them. Perhaps he was; the trouble, as Mr. Arvin admits, is that if he was he nowhere discussed them.

The fallacy is obvious. The newspapers carry lots of stories

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which any given reader either skips or reads so casually that no information sticks.

But to apply analyses of contemporary thought to literature may be to do worse than waste time and paper. In 1893 Frederick Jackson Turner published his famous essay on the significance of the frontier in American history. The essay was one of those brilliantly obvious statements of something anybody ought to have seen and expressed but nobody else had—like Admiral Mahan's exposition of the theory of sea power. In 1927 Vernon Parrington began the study of what he called the American Mind. His purpose was admirable. He sought to coordinate American social and political thought with American literature, showing the latter as a growth of a whole society instead of something created in an ivory tower insulated from the workaday world. Unfortunately Parrington's zeal led him to distinguish subdivisions and gradations of the American Mind that had only the most fragmentary and temporary existence in reality but that, thanks to Parrington, are solemnly commented upon in half the current textbooks and anthologies. Here, for example, is what Parrington said about the mind of the trans-Appalachian settlements in the first half of the 19th century:

> . . . Rude equalitarianism . . . marked the early stage of western commonwealth building. Naive Jeffersonians, these frontier citizens had not learned from Hamilton how useful the political state may become to those who know how to control its policies to their particular ends; but that lesson they were soon to learn. . . . The coonskin individualism that created Jacksonian democracy was gradually undermined by a middle-class individualism that inclined to the Whiggery of Henry Clay. The former was a spontaneous expression of the frontier spirit, the latter a calculating expression of the maturing settlement. The one discovered its native habitat on the backwoods farm, the other in the county seat town. The one was agrarian *laissez faire*, the other was exploitative paternalistic . . .

I have recently read a good deal about various parts of the American frontier—the Michigan of Caroline Kirkland's sketches, the Illinois of Lincoln's youth, the Missouri of Mark

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Twain's, California and Nevada in the '50s and '60s. Nowhere in the firsthand records can I see any mind that differs in any consistent way from that in the older parts of the country. Frontier Americans—the articulate minority who wrote the records and furnished the leadership—had the same basic assumptions as the rest. They believed in the American republican system, of course, as Englishmen believe in limited monarchy and an established church; their views on slavery and States' rights were those of the older sections whence they came. But their individualism, their ruthless exploitation of natural resources, were not peculiar to the frontier; they only had a more conspicuous chance there. Nobody would call George Washington a frontiersman yet Washington speculated in western lands along with everyone else who had the capital or pull to get into the game. Half the alleged frontier mind was plain human greed, which is the same the world over; the other half was the temporary roughness of a new settlement. And this latter half the actual pioneers were determined to get rid of as soon as possible. The moment they could afford it, and sometimes before, they tried—by building schools and churches, by founding newspapers, by replacing their log cabins or soddies with the current styles in architecture—to create their new communities in the images of those they had left behind in the East. The American frontier, apart from the skirmish line of trappers, prospectors and Indian traders, was not a separate entity; it was just America. It wasn't conscious of being different; it was trying with all its might to be the same. And usually it succeeded. It was imagination, generalizing from special or imperfectly comprehended facts, which set up the figment of the frontier mind, and in so doing has led astray a good part of the current generation of teachers of American literature.

Too many scholars, in short, are unconsciously following the immoral and immortal advice Mark Twain gave to young Rudyard Kipling one summer day in 1889: "Get your facts first, and then—you can distort 'em as much as you please."

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Scholarship and Democratic Leadership

ROSCOE POUND

An address delivered at the dinner given by the Phi Beta Kappa Associates in honor of *The American Scholar's* 10th anniversary.

WHEN Tom Hood was asked whether life was worth living he answered, "That depends upon the liver." When we proclaim philosophy the guide of life it might be answered that much depends upon the philosophy. The philosophy of the time when Phi Beta Kappa was founded was a creative philosophy. It held that men could do things by the use of reason and that reason could guide toward doing them well. Because the men of that time held to a creative philosophy and believed they could do great things, they succeeded in doing great things, not the least of which was the framing of the constitutions following the Declaration of Independence, and culminating in our Federal Constitution, and the political and legal institutions of our formative era. The fashionable social and political philosophies of today are of another type. On other occasions I have dubbed them give-it-up philosophies. So far from being creative, they are either destructive or obstructive. Some lead to what may be called institutional waste. More lead to a lack of faith in our ability to do things, a skeptical attitude toward our institutions, a feeling that what have been the characteristic features of our American polity are but myth or superstition or pious wish, or even pretense, and that therefore what happens in the conduct of our legal and political affairs does not really matter.

Socrates attributed human fallings-short of the presuppositions of life in civilized society to ignorance, and despite what the epistemologist and the psychologist have to say to this today, I suspect he was in large part right. To that extent, at any rate,

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there is hope in scholarship and ground of faith that what we stand for may be made to bring forth a fruitful leadership in our democracy. It is true there is more than one kind of scholarship. A university may be, as was once said of a great institution of learning, a home of lost causes. It may be a hothouse for growing political and social annuals. It may instead be a nursery of hardy perennials, grown from hardy perennials of our past and equal to a long and useful, not merely a fleeting and momentarily pleasing, existence. Likewise, there is more than one kind of leadership. To use military analogies, there may be a futile leadership of a forlorn hope or rash leadership into a trap; or there may be a thoroughly prepared leadership in an intelligently conducted advance; or there may be an obstinate rear-guard leadership to the last ditch. Surely we are in a position to do much in determining what sort of scholarship shall prevail in and what sort of leadership shall come forth from our institutions of learning.

In speaking and writing of democracy as something we all understand and take for granted we are likely to think of it in terms of power only, ignoring the responsibility which must be the correlative of power. "All power corrupts," says Lord Acton, "and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

In its primary meaning democracy is a form of government. It does not of necessity mean an absolute democracy. There may be an absolute monarchy or there may be a constitutional monarchy. There is no such thing as a constitutional or limited autocracy. The autocrat of limited powers is not an autocrat. On the other hand a democracy may be an absolute democracy or it may be a constitutional democracy. It is true there are those who tell us that responsibility in government is only a subjective ideal, a pious wish, belonging to a Utopia of ought-to-be, not to the hard realm of is. But the idea of an absolute democracy, a people as a whole, ruling benevolently by enlightened will over a great domain, administering an inspired personal justice after the manner of St. Louis under the oak at Vincennes and providing an efficient personal administration after the manner of

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Napoleon, is at best itself a pious wish. Even the simplest and purest democracy must act through agents; and it does not contradict the ultimate political power of the people to assert, as our polity has from the beginning, that the people may set limits to the exercise of power by those chosen to carry out the purposes of the people. Nor are the purposes of the people and the purposes of a plurality of the electorate for the time being necessarily the same. In the hands of temporary pluralities and of individual officials and agencies, the truth of what Lord Acton said about absolute power has been repeatedly demonstrated. The writers of today who argue that a democracy must be an absolute democracy, that a constitutional democracy is a contradiction in terms, and that the officials who act as the agents of a democracy, as representatives of the absolute power of a sovereign people, must in the nature of things be free of constitutional restraints, have missed the lesson of our political and legal history, are no friends of government by a people.

In the rise of political absolution all over the world the idea of a politically organized society operating according to law, in which officials have their powers defined by the law of the land and are held by law to exercise those powers not to the measure of individual inclination but to the measure of reason, is under attack. An idea of disappearance of law has many adherents. In Continental Europe it has been fostered by the failure of democratic states set up overnight with paper constitutions. Elsewhere it has gone along with the growth of autocratic governments, since law in any sense other than what the autocrat and his officials do is anathema to such a polity. Partly it is due to the rise to power of new elements in politically organized society that resent law as a check upon the uncontrolled power to which consciously or unconsciously their leaders aspire. Another form of this attack upon our constitutional legal polity would give a new content to the term "law." It teaches that the idea of a body of authoritative precepts applied by an authoritative technique in the judicial process is an illusion or superstition; that law is no more than whatever is done by the officials

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who wield the power of politically organized society for the time being. What they do, however they do it, is law. A third form seeks to merge the individual man in a group to which he must look for securing his interests and through which his contacts with the political organization and with his fellow man must take place. Such is the theory of the corporative state, the state in which the unit is not the individual man but the occupational group. Just as the idea of disappearance of law in Russia was followed by an autocracy which took seriously the proposition that there was to be no law but only administrative orders, the fascist idea of merging the individual legally in an occupational group succeeded in merging him politically in an absolute dictatorship.

Another line of attack teaches that there is a necessary contradiction between justice and law and no way of reaching a balance between the general security and the individual life. Hence instead of constitutionally guaranteed rights we must start with a postulated supreme political organization and derive all law therefrom. There are no such things as rights. What we have called rights are only inferences from the applications of the force of politically organized society. Laws are threats of exercising that force. From them expectations arise which are miscalled rights. It is significant that the part of the world where this doctrine was preached is now ruled by a dictator.

We often hear today that the separation of powers was nothing but a fashion of 18th-century political thinking: that Aristotle propounded it and Montesquieu mistakenly thought he saw it in the English polity of his time; that it was in the air when our first constitutions were adopted and so entered into them as a matter of course. Nothing could be more mistaken. It was no mere fashion of political thought which gave us written constitutions, including bills of rights, declaring themselves in Coke's language the supreme law of the land, and from the very beginning of our independence laying down a separation of powers. In all of them the separation of powers is much more insisted upon than the details of political organization. Often the

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latter were left much as they stood or were committed to legislation. We must note the experience that led up to this.

The Puritan Revolution had produced a written frame of government and important projects for a written constitution reflecting experience with absolute government and high-handed administration under the Tudors and Stuarts. But if the 17th-century colonists came to the new world with some such ideas the 18th-century colonists had good cause to develop faith in them. Down to the Revolution, full control of each colony or province rested in the Privy Council at Westminster. With its power to disallow all provincial acts it kept Pennsylvania twenty-one years without a court organization because no statutes organizing the courts of the Province could be framed to suit the ideas of the Council. It had the ultimate executive power in each province, exercised through instructions to the royal governor. It had the ultimate judicial power in each province: one of the chief causes for disallowing colonial or provincial statutes was attempt by legislation to limit appeals to the Privy Council. Again, in each province there was a like concentration of power in the governor and council. The Crown named the governor and he often named the council. Frequently this body was the upper house of the legislature, subject to scrutiny of its acts by the Privy Council. It had complete control of administration, subject to the scrutiny of the Privy Council, which called for reports from the governor and issued instructions to him. It was often the highest court of appeal in the province and its judgments and those of any other body set up as the highest court were subject to appeal to Westminster. Often the legislature exercised undistributed powers with no limitation beyond veto of laws or reversal of judgments by the Privy Council. It gave the colonists first-hand experience of a subordinating justice and of bodies wielding all the powers of politically organized society. It is no wonder that two years before the Declaration of Independence the Declaration of Rights of the Continental Congress claimed, as against omnicompetent legislatures and councils and administrative bodies without limited powers, the

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immemorial common-law rights of Englishmen, set forth by Coke and Blackstone, as their birthright.

To guide and restrain those who wield the force of a politically organized society is not the least task of education. If, as in the fashion of the moment, we hold that the only reality in the political order is force, force can control force only if it is a force imposing itself upon all other forces. Indeed some define law in precisely that way. Laws, they tell us, are threats, and law is an aggregate of the threats made by those who are established or selected to make and enforce them in title of the political organization of society. The state—says the realist, meaning men who act in its name—has the touch of Midas.

In this way of thinking, whatever has become the paramount agency of social control is something existing for its own sake. It is a phenomenon given to us, just as we are given the phenomena of physical nature. We cannot criticize the latter; we can only investigate them and seek to know them. So it is, we are told, with respect to the phenomenon of politically organized society. We cannot ascribe to the political organization of a society epithets such as good or bad, right or wrong, any more than we can ascribe them to the revolutions of the planets or the phases of the moon. They are mere subjective opinions incapable of demonstration. It has been the strength of religion as a restraining agency that it needed no demonstration. It was the strength of morals as a restraining agency in the last century that they were believed capable of metaphysical demonstration, as proceeding by an unchallengeable logical process from an unchallengeable metaphysical fundamental. It was the strength of law from the 12th to the 17th century that it was taken to have a foundation in a religion which called for no demonstration. It was the strength of law in the 17th and 18th centuries that it rested upon morals which were taken to be demonstrated by reason. It was the strength of law in the 19th century that along with morals it was a coordinate logical derivative from an unchallengeable, metaphysically-given fundamental. When demonstration is required of religion and yet it is held that such

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things as religion cannot be demonstrated; when reason, we are told, does no more than offer us specious justifyings of what we do as a result of the sort of deep-seated motivations that the past, I suspect, would have called original sin; when it is denied that metaphysics can give us unchallengeable fundamentals; religion goes by the board and morals and law are set at large. It is one of the paradoxes of the fashionable thought of today (which rejoices in paradoxes) that the so-called absolute thought of the immediate past, by which the officials and agents of politically organized society were held in check and led or constrained to rule measured by reason, led to liberty; whereas the realist thinking of today, which has cast off the bonds of metaphysics and logic and given up conceptions and absolute ideas, leads in practice to establishing or tolerating absolutism in politics and law.

I suspect the explanation of this paradox is that the so-called realist thinking of today is quite as absolute, though in another way and while flattering itself that it is purely relativist, as was the thinking of yesterday. It begins with a proposition, assumed to be unchallengeable, that starting points are not arguable. It then postulates something, presupposes or assumes something, holds that this something is incapable of proof and hence need not be inquired into further, and proceeds to treat it as an absolutely-given starting point. As it looks about, it sees a world in which the rise of political absolutism is the most conspicuous phenomenon of the moment. Since it sees force operating in the legal and political order it ascribes to force a paramount significance. It takes the exercise of force by the officials of politically organized society as an absolutely-given starting point. It asserts that this exercise of force is reality and that all restraint upon it is pious wish or myth or superstition or false pretense. It is a much more dogmatic mode of thought than that of the past which it rejects as dogmatic. For the thought of the past held that starting points were demonstrable and therefore arguable and hence that individual interpretations thereof were subject to criticism; whereas today the starting point is whatever one chooses to set up for oneself, not arguable or demonstrable and

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hence not subject to criticism. Put in the form of political and juristic theory such modes of thought cannot but be wonderfully heartening to the dictators who have arisen in their train.

Long ago Bryce spoke of a tendency of the American of the last quarter of the 19th century to disparage his own institutions and descant on the worst features of their operation. But this was at a time when nonetheless we had an abiding faith in them. They were not under serious attack and we could lean backward in the attempt to discuss them objectively. But disillusionment as to democratic institutions, doubt as to the theoretical possibility of a constitutional polity, and lack of faith in reason and law, taught as political philosophy, become another matter in an era of aggressive absolutism such as the present. I am no advocate of prescribing what shall be taught, or of authoritative laying down of what shall not be taught. I *am* hoping that a sounder scholarship and a philosophy leading to a more reasoned faith and a less paradoxical and wisecracking skepticism may bring about, without force and by their inherent appeal, a teaching to displace the current widespread attitude—which the believer in the American way of life, the characteristically-American legal constitutional democracy, cannot but feel is historically superficial and philosophically unsound. If we seek leaders rather than a leader—an *ex officio* superman—for no one man is indispensable in American democracy, we must seek to inculcate in our youth an intelligent faith in our institutions, based on knowledge of how they came to be and wherein they represent experience developed by reason and reason tested by experience. Instead of ignoring them, or measuring them by theories drawn from bankrupt polities abroad, or disparaging them in terms of give-it-up philosophies, we must assure a wise understanding of them. Wise leadership in education in American institutions is the surest way to produce the leaders in social and political life that our democracy needs.

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Richard Wagner: Oracle of National Socialism

GEORGE BEISWANGER

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW, commenting on the regard in which the German people hold their great composers—Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Wagner—once said: "Had the Germans understood any of these men, they would have hanged them." One need scarcely guess at Shaw's meaning in order to find the inclusion of Richard Wagner's name somewhat odd. There is no more imposing high priest in the cult of national socialism than the *Meister* of Bayreuth. Not only was he in person an embodiment of many of the fantasies that go to make up the Nazi imagination, but his writings and music dramas have provided Hitler's Germany with a specific and grandiose myth. Just what this myth is, where its cultural roots lie and how faithfully it reflects Wagner's central message are questions of genuine import today. Hitler himself has said: "Whoever wants to understand National Socialistic Germany must know Wagner."

To begin with, it is clear that the Wagner of Nazi Germany is more than an exegetical fabrication. The affinity which Hitler early discovered between his own turbulent feelings and the emotional content of some of the operas rests on a solid psychological base. There is ample reason, for example, for his attraction to the person of Lohengrin, wish-image as Lohengrin is of the lonely adolescent obsessed with the notion that behind the distant exterior which he presents to the world there resides a being whom above all others everyone should love. One need only recall the boy whose birth in all likelihood was clouded, who despised his family name, who feared and hated his father, who yearned for maternal affection, who held himself aloof

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from all companions, who failed miserably in school, who believed himself to be an artist and yet could not pass the entrance examinations for the Vienna academy of art, to understand what that boy had in common with the "knight of glorious mien." Wagner's explanation of the person of Elsa's husband comes too close to home for the parallel to be missed:

> Lohengrin sought the woman who should *trust* in him; who should not ask him how he was hight or whence he came, but love him as he was, and because he was whate'er she deemed him . . . his longing was *not* for worship nor for adoration, but for the only thing sufficient to redeem him from his loneliness, to still his deep desire—for *love*, for *being understood through love*. . . . But there clings to him the telltale halo of his "heightened" nature; he cannot appear as aught but suprahuman; the gaping of the common herd, the poisoned trail of envy, throw their shadows even across the loving maiden's heart; doubt and jealousy convince him that he has not been *understood* but only *worshipped*, and force from him the avowal of his divinity, wherewith, undone, he returns into his loneliness.[1]

It is the *Ring*, however, which supplies the myth-makers of the Third Reich their happiest hunting ground. Their exegesis is worth recounting in some detail. Alberich, the giants Fafnir and Fasolt, the wily Loki are respectively the mastermind, the bankers and the lawyer of bourgeois capitalism, a regime that has traded honor for power, love for gold, and would hold "genuine man" in slavery. Entangled with these powers of darkness is Wotan, ruler of an established order once glorious and good, whose legalities only serve to bind him to the evil alliance. Incapable of resolute action on his own part, the lord of Valhalla wills his own downfall at the hand of the heroic Volsungs, the race in whom resides all that was ever noble and fair in the old order of things.

But this race, begotten and beloved of the god, is sore beset. Sieglinde, Wotan's love-willed daughter, is held in loveless wedlock by the foe. Siegmund, Wotan's son, his hand his only strength, lives the life of an outlaw, wreaking violence on all

[1] Wagner, Richard, "A Communication to My Friends," *Coll. Prose Works*, Vol. I, p. 341. Italics in this and all subsequent quotations from Wagner are in the original.

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men though wanting only to do good. By divine gift a sword is his; but it is broken in mortal combat, not by defect of courage or skill but because, like Germany in 1918, Siegmund is betrayed. The hope of the world lies in Sieglinde's womb, in the heroic son whom she will bear and for whom Wotan's dearest wish-child, Brynhilde, is reserved as bride.

Siegfried, "the human being in the most natural and blithest fulness of his physical life," grows to manhood in secret. His guardian is the dwarf Mimi, the Jew, if you please, who keeps the youth in ignorance of his parentage and plots how he may use him to further his own lust for world power. But there speaks in Siegfried "*das Underton des Blutes*" (the phrase is not Wagner's). Instinctively knowing that Mimi is not his real father he forces from the dwarf the facts of his birth and the story of *Nothung*, his father's sword, the irresistible weapon of "inner natural necessity." Its broken fragments Siegfried forges (as Hitler rebuilt the German army); Fafnir, the dragon—"I keep what I have; let me sleep!"—is slain, the dwarf snuffed out, the ring, symbol of world power, won, the glorious bride attained. The "fair young form of man" that is the German race at last is free.

And if "error and bewilderment . . . nurtured on the wildest play of passions" at last leads Siegfried to destruction, does he not die a heroic death, a death self-willed as "the highest Yea to life"? It is glorious thus to die. And it is an honor for woman, man's devoted savior, to share in this death; to share, as Elsa was asked to do, in faith; to share in freest passion, like Brynhilde, giving oneself in shame and yet in wild abandon to that "laughing death" which is love; to share in sacrifice, dedicating one's lord as "world's treasure" to the mission of regenerating mankind at the hand of the sword; to join her Siegfried in self-immolation, leaping into the flames that, consuming lover and beloved and the timbers of a decayed heaven, restore the earth at last to the innocence of primeval nature.

These tales then are myths of *deutsche Ehre* and *deutsches Recht*, parables of a people with grievances to avenge and an

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urgent, significant reason for being. This people, this *Volk*, is "the epitome of all those men *who feel a common and collective want.*" Not for them "the evaporated notion" of mankind in general. Excluded are the *haves*, those who live only "for the enjoyment of their superfluity," whose needs are "artificial, egoistic and false," who "feel no want." Only from such a people, directing its energies toward "the great necessity of absolute life-needs," can come "the vital impulse" that creates true culture and art. Only in such a folk can the true God be found.

Such in brief is the Richard Wagner of National Socialism, the Wagner whose *Art and Revolution* (from which I have just quoted), written in 1849 as a communist manifesto and later repudiated, nonetheless completes with the writings on Reich and race the official canon.

Is it the whole, is it even the genuine Wagner? This is a question with which even the Nazi theologians have been forced to wrestle. Elsa, for example, eventually chooses to doubt her "Fuehrer," and with this doubt Lohengrin meekly returns to his mysterious Berchtesgaden. The Siegfried of *Götterdämmerung*, this gallant figure of "the real naked man . . . in uncramped freest motion," becomes stupid, clings bewitched to a ring whose significance he has unconscionably forgotten, falls into the snare of the foe he came to destroy and dies with a spear in his back. The exegetical problems thus posed have as a matter of fact forced the doctors, to whom on second thought the values of self-immolation seem less and less attractive, to turn from Siegfried to Hagen, his betrayer, as Germany's true symbol-fuehrer. But since Hagen likewise perishes, it has become customary to resurrect the dreadful after-epic of the old *Nibelungenlied* which Wagner rejected in toto, the theologians at last finding the demon they sought in the ravening person of Gudrune, paragon of ruthless revenge and total destruction.

As Bernard Shaw pointed out many years ago, the story of the *Ring* falls to pieces with *Götterdämmerung* if the tetralogy is read as a fable of triumphant political regeneration. And there is *Parsifal*, that mighty parable of the ethical life, in which

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the whole rank world of illimitable violence and insatiable lust sinks with Klingsor's garden into nothingness beneath the flight of the spear—a lance caught and held by a simple Christian saint who calls mankind to renunciation, humility and the service of love.

Parsifal, Thomas Mann has said, is "the final, splendid, logical summing up of a lifework fundamentally romantic and Christian."[2] Nazi oracle, Christian seer: how is the paradox to be explained?

The quotation suggests a strategic clue. A "romantic" artist, Richard Wagner shared the delusion which runs like a tragic thread through Western thought for more than two hundred years, the belief that passion is self-validating. To love—by which the romantic means to feel, to desire, to demand—is to deserve. To want is to have the right to possess. The romantic had the audacity, the impious pride (the point is Santayana's) to hold that the world is created in his own image, after his own desire. It is Tristan, sinking with Isolde into the night of endless longing, who exclaims, "*Selbst dann bin ich das Welt!*"

Not only did Wagner share this delusion but he accepted its most characteristic symbol, the romantic notion of the artist. The genius, he who creates a world in accordance with the inner dream, is the peculiar embodiment of feeling's necessity, that claim which human emotion makes upon the world and to which nature herself, the romantic believed, must and will administer. Some such compulsion the artist does exercise over the materials of his art, forcing them to take shape in accordance with the dictates of his fancy. But this is not what the romantic had in mind so much as the compulsive power of the imagination itself which, wiping out all sense of outer reality, makes of its own vision the only world there is. To him, it is the artist who actually has found the way to compel reality to be what he wants it to be.

But the world of custom and law lies athwart his path, denying his vision, repudiating his demands. This hard fact, for so

[2] Mann, Thomas, *Freud, Goethe, Wagner*, p. 106.

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the romantic saw it, led to a companion delusion, likewise deeply rooted in the Western imagination and responsible in part (as much as any idea can be responsible) for the self-conscious, little-men dictators of today. Feeling's necessity was crowned king; its commands were arrogated into a law above all law. If society and state refused to acknowledge passion's imperative as categorical, then both were to be swept away at the hand of passion's servant, the artist. And mankind will be on his side. What the artist wants is what the oppressed masses of men desire, or would desire if freed from their chains.

So it was that the dream of unconditional omnipotence (to use a psychoanalytic expression) that warms the reverie of children came to be regarded as the evidence and insignia of genius, which thereupon and for this reason had bestowed upon it the role of the tyrant as its natural right. Milton's Satan, Byron's Cain, Nietzsche's Zarathustra, Wagner's Siegfried came to be thought of as the ideal man after whom life was to be patterned. Poets, dramatists, painters and composers put on his accouterments with their Bohemian cloaks. Garbed in this guise, Richard Wagner achieved within his own domain the proudest career of romantic dictatorship the world has ever seen.

In a sense, then, Wagner and his fellow romantics can be held to account for Hitler, Mussolini and Lenin, since they supplied in part the ideological pattern for their behavior. Given the humus deposited in the imagination by such a congeries of ideas it takes only a potential poet, whose moral horror at the evils of industrial capitalism led him to abandon the poetic vocation, to produce a Karl Marx. Given the same climate of thought it takes only a frustrated, indigent youth, yearning to be an artist and yet unable to discipline himself to the arduous task of art production, to bring forth an Adolf Hitler.

Yet the answer is too easy. For under the same conditions Richard Wagner, saved from a like fate—as he explicitly says—by his art, faced the personal and social implications of the romantic delusions, stated in dramatic terms the tragedy of

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those who fall under their spell and at last worked his way back to a saner outlook upon himself and the world. This, I think, can be shown to be the significance of Wagner's thinking and art, when both are seen in their entirety as a single lifework. For it must be kept in mind that the romantic artist by virtue of his preconceptions and his preoccupation with the passional life makes of art the device by which he learns to grow up. He uses art to cast the light of consciousness upon every dark and childish demon in his soul. They must be made to perform on the stage of his imagination in all their perverse splendor if they are eventually to be exorcised. His art, as Goethe said, becomes a life confession; it travels the Faustian path, nourishing itself upon every evil fruit that grows by the way. Only if the artist lives out the length of days and only if his integrity as an artist is inviolable does he finally scale the height of genuine humanity and become truly wise. Anyone who lingers in the vale of shadows in which the romantic artist long sojourns will find, as contemporary Germany has found, a mythology to suit the cruel and greedy soul.

Considering Wagner's lifework then as a spiritual quest, it is significant that the Nazi canon pays scant attention to the very first stages, the personal operas from *Das Liebesverbot* to *Tannhäuser*, in which the conflict between the ideal of illimitable passion (the *hochste Lust* of the *Liebestod*) and the Christian ethic is first set forth. The reason for this neglect is understandable. These operas are concerned with the sensual source of the furies which the Nazi imagination projects outward upon the body of communal life. Their claim to order and dominate person and society is rejected, particularly in *Tannhäuser*. And while the rejection may impress one as insincere, the message itself is clear and its anti-totalitarian import unmistakable.

The Wagner upon whom Nazidom has bestowed its official benediction begins with the opera in which the composer for the first time presents himself as an artist fitted by the godlikeness of his genius to be Germany's cultural Fuehrer. Lohen-

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grin, as has already been suggested, is an apologue of the God-sent redeemer, forced to return to "the Alpine chill" of human isolation because those to whom he is sent fail to accept him at his word. The opera is not the first example in European literature of the myth of rejected genius nor was it to be the last. Wagner, in short, could easily have abided by this notion as his crowning insight, spending the rest of his days, as so many romantic writers were to do, upon a Nietzschean mountain-top "stonily frowning down upon the warm and living world below." Thus he would have justified Hitler's admiration. It is not too much to say that the dictator of totalitarian Germany is the 20th-century Lohengrin: tyrant by virtue of the magic of his voice and the flash of his sword, he extracts from his people, and demands of the world, the love due him as one sent from God.

But no sooner was *Lohengrin* composed than Wagner saw that Elsa had been right. Her desire for mutual confiding was genuinely human; Lohengrin's demand for unquestioning faith was not. Wagner's development at this point is of extraordinary interest. It was in part the result of an insight into motives other than his own, an insight all the more deserving of remark since it is commonly overlooked. But equally important was the influence of Ludwig Feuerbach and a group of communist revolutionaries stemming philosophically from Feuerbach, who caused Wagner to reshape his conception of the artist in terms of the role which the artist might play in ushering in a new social order.

All this was tied in with his afterthoughts on the character of Elsa. "Elsa, the woman," he said, "made me a revolutionary at one blow. She was the spirit of the folk, for whose redeeming hand I, too, as artist-man was longing." Ludicrous as these words may sound to our ears today, they deserve serious analysis, for they locate the motive which, aroused but not always guided by a study of the economic and social structure of mid-century Europe, led not only Wagner but many romantic intellects of the time, including Karl Marx, to the barricades of 1848. The

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folk idea which Wagner expounded in *Art and Revolution*, the concept of *the masses* instinctively united in terms of absolute needs from which Wagner's idea was drawn, took shape, at least in part, as the emotional obverse of the romantic notion of the heroic rebel, the genius as leader of the social revolution.

On this point Wagner himself is quite clear and, one may add, rather more honest than his fellow revolutionaries. Anyone, Wagner said, thrust out against modern society, filled with loathing for "the shallow joys of our inhuman culture or with hatred for a utilitarianism that brings its uses only to the needless and never to the needy," who "*not* from this conglomerate of pride and baseness, of shamelessness and cringing" which is the people as they actually exist and "*not* from the *statutory rights* which hold this composite together" but "from the fulness and the depth of naked *human nature* and the irrefutable right of its absolute need, draws force for resistance, for revolt, for assault upon the oppressor of this nature—he then who *must* stand up in revolt, and deal assault and openly allow this plain necessity in that he gladly suffers every other sorrow for its sake, and, if need should be, will even offer up his life—*he and he alone* belongs to the people." The animus is plain. Whether the promised land into which the masses are to be led is described, as with Schiller and Wagner, in terms of a romanticizing of Greek life or in accordance with the more politically minded ideal of the classless society, it is the leader in each case who sees himself as the inspired channel of social wisdom and the personal repository of social necessity. It is as if mankind were deified *en masse* in order that there might be adequate social validation for the claims of the revolutionary genius.

The revolution of 1848, in the preparation for which Wagner participated, was to establish this romantic utopia at a clap. When it failed Wagner and his theory of the revolutionary artist were at an impasse. What was he to do? This was the question which Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels also faced. The answer they gave was to go underground. Perhaps no more momentous decision was to be made in the whole course of revo-

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lutionary history. For it meant that, abandoning the effort to reconstruct society by means of the instruments and techniques of the political arts, these men decided to become "Siegmunds," that is to say, outlaws, their endeavor directed toward the overthrow of "the existing order." They chose in short to remain romantic revolutionaries, waging relentless subversive warfare on the whole of political and social life.

For a time this seemed to Wagner as well the only way out. But instead of taking it he turned back to an early sketch, entitled *Siegfried's Tod*, for a music drama, expanding it into the poem of the *Ring*. That is to say, eighty years before Europe was to score his parable in blood, Wagner wrote the tragedy of a society in which a hero-leader essays to regenerate mankind by force. The *Ring*, as Shaw rightly says though he fails to push the insight for all it is worth, is "the epic of Bakunin," the story of the fate of the high-minded man who in the name of necessity sets himself the task of creating a new order by means of the sword. That this is the significance of Siegfried's life is expressly stated by Wagner: "the will, that fain would shape a world according to its wish, at last can reach no greater satisfaction than the breaking of itself in dignified annulment." But *Götterdämmerung* is even more explicit. The heroic rebel eventually swears blood brotherhood with the Gibichungs, liquidating his revolution in counter-revolution. Stalin succeeds Lenin; Mussolini socialist becomes Mussolini Caesar; Roehm gives place to Goering; the Gibichungs win.

In his middle years, then, Wagner not only freed himself from that part of the romantic ideology which had dictated the revolutionary approach to political and social reconstruction but he expounded its doom in dramatic terms. Moreover, in *Tristan and Isolde* (especially the Tristan of the Third Act) he laid bare the agonizing lust for unlimited expression which lies beneath the frenzied impulses and wild ecstasies—in political disguise—of the *Ring*. He made clear what we are just beginning to learn—that in the final analysis Freud supplies the most profound commentary on today's dictator complex.

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The romantic delusions had been laid bare. How were they to be expunged? With this question began Wagner's final ascent, forecast years before by his interest in the legends of the medieval minnesingers and by an early effort to turn the story of Jesus into a music drama. In *Die Meistersinger* Walther is an incipient romantic, violently in rebellion against the bourgeois leaders of Nuremberg who refuse to acknowledge him an artist by nature's right and likewise forbid him his passion's desire. Pogner's daughter, Eva, is a woman to match; within her soul burns the same flame that had led to Brynhilde's immolation and the *Liebestod*. But there is Hans Sachs, who knows that all this is *Wahn* which will destroy man and society unless it can be tempered and brought under control. The creative spark and love's impetuosity must be caught and disciplined till they issue forth in song worthy of prize and a life upon which the hand of public approval may be laid in benediction. The quiet spirit, the persuasive character—the politician, if you please, in the true sense of the term, for it is as politician that Sachs moves among the people of Nuremberg—can still the passions of the mob, cajole the powers that be, beat the established order at its own game and restore a disrupted community to good fellowship, tranquillity and joy.

All this, together with the ethic of *Parsifal*, Wagner thought out and put into writing at the time he was beginning to set it down in score. *State and Religion*, the essay written for King Ludwig of Bavaria in 1864 as a record of Wagner's artistic and intellectual development, is certainly the most remarkable discussion of politics to come from the pen of an artist. Wagner begins by acknowledging the motive by which his political activity had been animated. "What I sought was really never aught beyond my art—that art which I took so earnestly that I asked for it a basis and sanction in life, in the state, and lastly in religion." What he had asked for was a society in which the romantic would not only have every want satisfied on command but would offer in his own headstrong way of life the only pattern of membership that counted.

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But, Wagner says, there is no form of government nor way of ordering human life that can make this demand practicable. Nor is there any genuine desire on the part of mankind that it should ever be satisfied. The human intellect, even that of the artist, is petty and weak: "not knowledge prompts its movement, but merely headlong impulse . . . which procures for itself just so much light and knowledge as will suffice to still the pressing need." Only the "practicing politicians" know this; and this is all to their credit. Since their eye is upon "the truly human interests," they deserve to rule, rather than the "world-improvers" who "demand from the world a thing it cannot give."

Genuine government, says Wagner, is an agency for bringing some sort of working agreement out of the violent, passionate forces that lead all men to greed and self-indulgence. Stability is its aim, and this can be achieved only as there is constant adjustment of "the suffering interests of the less favored." But this means that government must not and cannot be handed over to a faction that controls the state for its own ends. It must be embodied in a concrete and open symbol which, though by a fiction, represents the good of all. For Wagner this symbol is the monarch (though his definition applies equally well to any publicly acknowledged and accepted instrumentality of government) whose "sphere is equity, and where this is unattainable, the exercise of grace." As against purely partisan interests he is "the representative of the purely human interests, and in the eyes of the party-seeking citizen he must therefore occupy a position well-nigh superhuman."

This is so, however, not by romantic necessity nor by divine right but by virtue of the capacity of man to conceive, as if by *Wahn*, a good that is higher than merely personal ends. Patriotism, for such is this capacity called with reference to the state, is therefore the psychological foundation of government. But it remains nonetheless selfish and individual. "Injustice and violence toward other states and peoples have been the actual dynamic law of patriotism throughout all time. . . . The

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quiet, and thus the power, of one's own state appears securable in no other way than through the powerlessness of other states." This is a doubly tragic conclusion, since violence toward one's neighbors must needs react in terms of violence within. Patriotism, which is necessary "in order to preserve government that will satisfy immediate needs, redress injustice and secure tranquillity," is "a constant menace to public peace and equity." The tragedy of government is that it continually sacrifices its chief aim, "the purely human," upon "the altar of state."

In Wagner's judgment there is only one way of escape. No state can rightly perform its task or even continue to exist unless people and government, and especially those in charge of government, are deeply religious. For religion inculcates "a feeling for the unblessedness of human being and of the state's profound inadequacy to still the purely human need. Its inmost kernel is denial of the world . . . and struggle for redemption from it, prepared for by renunciation, attained by faith." In other words (and this is what Wagner actually means despite the words borrowed from Schopenhauer) the human battle for position and place, for honor and glory, for wealth and power must be seen for what it is, a product of *Wahn* and therefore an illusion. The child must surrender his delusion of omnipotence, the adolescent his mirror-image of a hero-self, the adult competitive man his empty standards of worth. We must grow up if we are to enter the kingdom of genuine humanity.

To the king, the ruler, the administrator, this insight, Wagner says, can come only through voluntary suffering: the gentle refusal of Hans Sachs to take what he could have but what he knows is not his; the sensitivity of Parsifal to the pain men inflict upon others when they are passion-wounded within. Only on this road can the leader of men find true happiness, "the measureless lofty joy of world-conquering, compared with which the empty pleasure of the world-conqueror seems downright null and childish."

This is the ethic that finally emerges from Wagner's writings and from the substance of his music dramas. It does not

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read like the philosophy of a totalitarian mind. True, the romantic has not been left entirely behind. There is much that is fustian and fake in the rites celebrated at Montsalvat. In person Wagner remained to the end of his days an aristocrat, a monarchist, a pompous and imperious old man, capable of applauding the chauvinism of Bismarck without stopping to think it through in terms of his own mature conclusions about man, society and the state. But it is these latter upon which his art and his full message rest, and they are heresy so far as national socialism is concerned. That heresy lies embedded in every one of his operas, dictating their action and dramatic outcome.

It is the heresy which in due course of time will play its part in dispelling the anti-human dogmas that reign in Germany today. For Wagner is more German than Hitler's Germany. Today its people are being told that Wagner reveals "the nature and development of the German people, their thought-world, folk-character and cultural growth." If this be true, then it is true in the sense which Thomas Mann had in mind when he wrote, "Wagner's art is the most sensational self-portrayal and self-critique of the German nature which it is possible to conceive." But even this statement is too parochial and thereby open to grave misinterpretation. Wagner's work is a critique of the German mentality but it is also a critique of the whole Western mind. Since it comes from a German, that is all the more significant.

In short, the ideas, the images, the dark myths upon which Nazism feeds are European in nature and origin. If they fester in the writings of Goethe and Kleist, of Schelling, Hegel and Nietzsche, they also infest pages of Shelley and Byron, Swinburne, Kipling, George Moore and D. H. Lawrence, Rousseau and Robespierre, Baudelaire and Verlaine, Zola and Romain Rolland. The virus and its anti-bodies struggle in the novels of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. The infection marches upon the body of American literature in Hawthorne and Poe and Melville, in Faulkner and Hemingway and Thomas Wolfe, in the angry poems, plays and tracts for the times that the war has

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already spewed forth. The disease is as old as the spirochetes whose physical ravages can be detected on the unearthed bones of primitive man. It fattens on the gloomy fantasies that inhabit the myths of Greece and Rome (as well as those of the northland), that darken pages of the Old Testament and the Revelation of St. John, that stain the stories of martyrs and saints. Nor dare one forget Plato whose deification of personal vision, whose wildly romantic glorification of the inner light, first supplied Western thought with an imposing conceptual apparatus by which to justify its habitual excursions into the dark corners of the *ur-mind*.

The ordeal through which Western civilization (let us include Japan as its latest product) is passing is a spiritual one in the profoundest sense of the term, a civil war raging not between class and class, nation and nation, race and race, but between that part of man's soul which goes abroad seeking whom it may devour and that part which hungers and thirsts after righteousness. The fear that it may be impossible to combat the revolution of nihilism without accepting its methods and taking its spirit to our bosom, the very fact that this dilemma has seemed genuine, indicates in itself how centrally spiritual the struggle is. In opposing totalitarianism man fights a part of himself, that part which has been so continuously nourished on the Western dream of unlimited power, prosperity and pleasure.

It is this which constitutes today's ordeal—an ordeal that was Wagner's, too. He fed upon the same inordinate impieties and was in truth their oracle. But he magnified their perverse glory (that is why he is canonized in Germany today) only to spell out the doom of those who yield themselves to its enchantment. To insist, therefore, that Richard Wagner can truthfully be interpreted only as a prophet of man's ultimate victory over himself is to insist that the mind of European man has within it the ideas and the ideals by means of which it can expunge its own delusions and come at last to itself.

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In the Workshop

Anthropology and Cultural Change

RUTH BENEDICT

SINCE the earliest days of the study of anthropology, no one has ever spotted an anthropologist by the problems he discussed. He has shared all his problems with other sciences and these have varied from decade to decade according to what questions were uppermost in science or in society. But you can always know an anthropologist by his subject matter. Whether he is an archeologist, a linguist, a physical anthropologist or a student of religion or folklore, he uses material from peoples all over the world. Anthropology's most distinctive mark is that it chooses to study strange peoples. It is definitely weighted *against* the one particular historical episode in which our civilization figures. As an archeologist the anthropologist is digging up remains of tribes and nations that have *not* contributed to our civilization. As a linguist he is studying the vocabulary and grammar of some little horde in Australia or some island in Oceania. As a physical anthropologist his studies include paleolithic skeletons and living Hottentots. As a cultural anthropologist, studying livelihood, the family, the state, religion and ethics, he is happiest when he can gather his material from a people as little influenced as possible, down all their history, by our own civilization.

No doubt there are some anthropologists to whom this preoccupation with the faraway is a grateful escape from what is called "reality." But anthropology has had a singularly consistent history, whatever the problem uppermost at the time, of using this esoteric material to answer questions about ourselves and our own civilization. Anthropologists have always thought it was most unlikely that our civilization could be understood as a single special creation apart from all others. They have always thought that the better our knowledge of other episodes, the better our understanding of the one in which we figure.

Since anthropology first became a systematic study (about the middle of the last century), the problems on which people have most wanted information have changed. In England early anthropology flourished at a time when the deep-seated theological dogma of a Divine Plan was being looked at more and more

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askance. Darwin's *Origin of Species* had been published in 1859 and the problem of the early anthropologists was to square their data on preliterate human history with this new scheme, Evolution. The business of the anthropologist was to arrange on one ascending ladder all the cultures of the world until they culminated in Western Civilization; whether it was European hairiness or monogamy or private property or monotheism, all cultures and races since the beginning had been in travail to produce this finest flower. They were all on lower rungs of the ladder up which we had climbed to the top. The task of the anthropologist was to arrange societies in a single upward progression to demonstrate the Natural Plan. It provided a world scheme as gratifying in its way as the older theological one which had proved that our customs, our ethics, our religion were final truths sanctioned and revealed by a divine being.

This cosmic scheme was discredited chiefly by anthropologists' increasing study of the distribution of cultural traits. Those cultural elements which the evolutionists had regarded as indices of evolutionary stages, instead of occurring at a certain level of cultural development, were actually locally distributed. Even a pigmy tribe if it lived in the neighborhood of tribes with complicated cultures adopted many of the latter's ways of life. Millions of criss-cross borrowings had occurred, and the resultant picture was that of constant cross-fertilization even though some of these tribes were populous and wealthy and had kings and temples, and others were savage food gatherers. This picture was at the opposite pole from that of the earlier students whose theories had been based on the assumption that each group of tribes had its own orderly evolution, hermetically sealed against outside influences.

The study of diffusion, as this study of the distribution of cultural traits is called, had two chief positive results. In the first place it enabled the anthropologist to reconstruct history in eras that had left no written records. The language, the implements and the myths of Madagascar natives were those of the Malay peoples one third of the way around the globe; therefore it could be shown that there had been migrations or contact in an era from which no records were available. The history of borrowing and of the movements of peoples stood out clearly on continent after continent. In the second place, the study of diffusion showed how often mankind borrows and how seldom he invents. It proved that human progress had been overwhelmingly due to the sharing of inventions, that every race was indebted to other races and that every tribe had in common with a hundred others the things it most dearly valued. It stressed the great cultural commonwealths of the world.

The work of physical anthropologists rounded out and enriched this reconstruction of world history, for their work made it possible to answer

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questions about race and its relation to civilization. One of the important questions is whether certain races have always been the leaders in the development of civilization and certain others always the incapable. The first professional anthropologist, Theodor Waitz, investigated this subject in 1859 with special reference to the Negro and on the basis of all the facts concluded that there was no evidence of innate racial disability. Nor could the white race claim that it had led the march of civilization down the ages. Much work has been done since the days of Waitz but it has all reaffirmed his conclusions. Every race has its nations of complex civilization and its tribes and each race has also its groups which are backward and live in the simplest possible fashion. Peoples of every race have forged ahead under certain conditions and built great cities and set up great states, and rude people of barbarian ancestry have again and again shown themselves abundantly able to adopt the highest extant civilization and to contribute to its development. The Nordics were once just such a rude people about the time of the fall of the Roman Empire. Their race did not disqualify them from becoming leaders in civilization, but neither is that leadership an innate consequence of their race.

Another question which anthropology can answer categorically is closely associated with this question of the superiority of one race over others: has a pure race any advantage over a mixed race? The answer is simple: every civilized group ever known has been racially mixed. The "pure" races are small isolated groups in inaccessible spots in the Arctic or in jungle and not one of them is a leader in the progress of civilization. High civilization does not occur without considerable diversity of population and contacts of peoples and in such situations ancestry is always mixed.

During this period when anthropologists were primarily engaged in studying diffusion and invention and the history of civilization, they were actually gathering a great deal of information about measurements of bodily form and the presence or absence of the lance or linked totem or bride price. They were accumulating detailed descriptions of the way life was lived in different cultures. They were recording how people acted and felt and thought. They were getting data on human behavior from Eskimo sea-mammal hunters, from South African agriculturalists, from Siberian reindeer herders, from Indian buffalo hunters. These descriptions of other societies raised other questions than those about diffusion and the growth of civilization. They raised questions about "human nature." In some societies adolescence was a period of rebellion, of stress and strain; in some societies it was a period of calm, a time when one especially enjoyed oneself. In some societies men were violent and quarrelsome; in some, no voice was raised above its wonted key and no man was

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known in all their memory to have struck another. The list of contrasts was endless, and the conclusion could not be avoided: a great deal of what had ordinarily been regarded as due to "human nature" was, instead, culturally determined. Institutions, emotions and attitudes varied with culture, that body of conventions and values which is socially transmitted in every society and which distinguishes that society from all others which belong to a different tradition. Many things which had been accepted as psychological and sociological "laws" so long as psychologists and sociologists confined their studies to our own culture in our own lifetimes were, it seemed, special ways of behaving or of organizing economic or political life which had grown up in our particular culture.

Because these cultural contrasts were so great, it led to a different orientation of studies of human behavior and of society even in our own culture. In accounting for behavior it had been customary to take two factors into account: heredity, and the idiosyncratic incidents of individual life. To these now had to be added the social order in which an individual had been reared and according to which he conducted his life. This added factor did not minimize the other two; it supplemented them. Heredity was still important—not the mythology of a "racial" inheritance, but the health and energy and constitution which comes from a man's biological parents and forebears. Idiosyncratic facts of a man's life were also still important whether one was studying human behavior in a tribe up the Amazon or in a city like New York. Whether a child's mother brushed it aside in favor of an older brother might still be an important factor in his life. But culture could make any specific inheritance or any episode in an individual's life either a matter of pride or of humiliation. When some cultures made trance or sexual aberrancy prideful, such behaviors no longer had the same symptoms and conflicts which they have when they are studied in our culture. When some cultures make accumulation of property shameful, those who try to accumulate no longer have the kind of behavior we associate with the rich. When some cultures make it institutionally impossible for one man to compel another against his will unless one or both of them act in opposition to all tribal sanctions, people who try to push people around do not have the characteristic which power gives in our culture.

Much anthropological study of these problems stresses merely cultural relativity; it emphasizes the fact that behavior which occurs in our society does not occur in many other societies and that behavior which is bizarre in our society is the rule in many others. Some students have stopped at this point in their investigations and they have used their anthropology to reinforce modern skepticism about human values. From the fact that morality in one culture is the immorality of other cultures, that the irreligion of one so-

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ciety is the religion of another, they have concluded only that morality and religion are illusions and that all things are relative. They have pointed out the well-proven fact that polygamy in some societies builds a stable and cohesive family, and they have concluded that the value we place on monogamy is an illusion. They have shown that religious practices are often techniques for stealing or killing, and that religious devotion is often a reason for inquisitions; they have said therefore that religion is a whited sepulchre.

Such skepticism comes from stopping short at elementary questions. These students are really asking only: will monogamy automatically make stable and companionable marriages, or will religion automatically concern itself with ideal values? Certainly they will not. But such facts only clear the ground and make it possible to separate those things which are culturally relative from those that are not. The fundamental problem in the study of society—like the fundamental problem in engineering or in physiology—is still to learn the conditions which do bring about a designated outcome. We need desperately to know the positive conditions under which, for instance, social conflict and disintegration occur, and it is possible to study such conditions in society after society with the same scientific detachment with which one studies cultural relativity. We need to know what conditions are necessary for social cohesion and stability, and these too can be studied. It is a matter of phrasing the anthropological question positively.

Anthropology has unique advantages for such a study. Sociology and psychology depend upon data from one epoch and region of the world—contemporary Western Civilization. They cannot provide from their own material sufficient instances against which to check hypotheses. History is limited to what is preserved in documents; historians cannot go and see the peoples they study. They know, for instance, that only one sixth of the men of Athens were freeborn citizens and that they lived in comparative leisure on the produce of slaves and non-citizens. But historical records tell only of the freeborn, and the historian cannot study class relations in Athens. He cannot go beyond a record of a sale of slaves to find out what the attitudes of master and man were, or what kind of life the slaves lived among themselves. Were the slaves loyal to their masters or were they sullenly subservient? Were they given responsibility or were they kept in their place? These social conditions are not described in the Greek texts of that day.

Anthropologists, however, are lucky. They can watch all that happens in any society they visit. They can hear any confidences. They can know intimately the leaders and the derelicts. They can document the gap between the way people say they ought to behave in any situation and the way they do behave. Social problems and problems of individual behavior are spread before them and

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can be studied, as it were, in the flesh, in all their varieties.

Such study of human behavior under differing cultural conditions is known as the study of culture and personality. Every social order brings certain pressures to bear upon its members and requires of them certain things; it eliminates or minimizes pressures and obligations that other cultures use to the hilt. These pressures and requirements begin at birth and it is therefore necessary to study how they are built into the individual in babyhood and in childhood and continued—or controverted—in adolescence and in adulthood. The way in which babies are brought up makes them children who behave in a particular fashion and have a particular set of motives. Most of these methods work well or badly according to whether or not they are congruent with the cultural demands upon adults. Or, in positive terms, ways of bringing up children which are congruent with the cultural values of a society are one of the prime conditions which make that society function well and vigorously.

The study of culture and personality makes it possible to understand our own society in comparison with many others and to answer many questions we need to know in our own embattled democracy. It can tell us under what conditions democracies have worked and under what conditions they have proved socially disastrous. It can tell us under what conditions men have regarded themselves as free men and under what conditions they have regarded themselves as not free. As we face the future in America, with all the social changes we know that it must include, we need to steady ourselves with as much knowledge of human experience in these matters as we can find. Any knowledge that makes us more objective about cultural change, any knowledge that gives us certain points of the compass to steer by may be of inestimable value. The material the anthropologist works with provides a great opportunity for clearer understanding of our own urgent social problems in peace or war, and there have been few periods in history when clarity was more needed.

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Discussion

Post-War Cooperation Needed

To the Editor:

In response to the invitation in your Winter 1941-42 issue, let me say that I heartily approve of what you are doing in the magazine and the way you are doing it. A little later I may take the liberty of making some concrete suggestions as to subjects to be treated.

In the present number I have read, with considerable interest and complete disapproval, the article by Mr. Erskine on "England and the English-Speaking People." I believe he not only underestimates the extent and soundness of the political, economic and social changes that are now taking place in England, but misconceives the role that the United States is destined to play in the Anglo-American entente (or whatever else you may call it) that is bound to come about after this war. Many Americans (and I myself am one) believe that our country is bound to take a leading part in world affairs, not, as Mr. Erskine seems to fear, tied to Britain's apron strings, but quite the opposite—as the one who holds the apron strings. We will not go into the British Empire. Both Englishmen and Americans, we believe, will agree upon some sort of cooperation that will be much greater, more comprehensive and more beneficial to the entire human race.

It was not my intention to preach at you but to thank you for giving me the opportunity to write and, frankly, to disagree entirely with Mr. Erskine in what seems to be only his poorly concealed dislike of England.

I feel tolerably confident that most thoughtful Englishmen realize that their alleged role of world domination is over. There are evidences that, contrary to what Mr. Erskine says, England's ruling class does realize that its day is over. And, finally, as to "repealing the Declaration of Independence," the phrase, it seems to me, is only clever phraseological byplay.

I am among those Americans who sincerely hope that, when this cruel, insane conflict is over, we shall win the peace. A generation ago we won the war and we Americans, with as much blindness as the English and French, lost the peace.

Louis E. Van Norman,
San Diego, Calif.

A Brief for Britain

To the Editor:

My first reaction on reading John Erskine's astonishing leading article in the Winter number of The American Scholar was a hot amalgam of indignation and disgust. Now my mood is one of sorrow rather than anger that such a brilliant intellect could stoop to a statement so manifestly unfair, bitterly prejudiced, and cruelly misleading to the unwary reader. I cannot understand how such a jaundiced view of things escaped the kindly censorship of the editors who are supposed to have their critical wits about them.

No doubt Mr. Erskine conceived that he was inspired by a pure and ardent Americanism. Unfortunately, his article happens to be profoundly unpatriotic, especially in the present juncture. Its timing is frankly abominable. The Japanese bombs that fell upon Oahu not only violated our territory, wrecked our property, and murdered our officers and men; they smashed to smithereens the last vestiges of isolationism in our land. The loudest isolationists have been crawling out of the wreckage with their hands up. Mr. Erskine would do well to add his *mea culpa*.

As for the more or less remote past, let the dead bury their own dead. Mr. Erskine's references to Benedict Arnold and the Declaration of Independence are completely irrelevant. His quotation of current British sources is incredibly inept. The suggestion that Britain might be planning to "gang up" (Mr. Erskine's phrase) with Hitler against us unless we do her bidding and the puerile reference to Winston Churchill's cigars may serve as examples. It is not at all strange, but rather quite natural, that some Englishmen should express in irresponsible and even foolish terms their desperate hope of a world to come in which such horrors will be impossible. But let Mr. Erskine quote one responsible British statesman as anticipating the political absorption of the United States, or anything more than the practical cooperation of the Empire and our country in laying the foundations of a better world organization. Let us not forget that the tragic failure of the first generous effort toward such a result was due in large part to our cowardly withdrawal from a plan proposed by our own repre-

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sentatives. And this withdrawal was due in turn to the unpardonable rancor of a "scholar in politics" who could see no further than his own petty personal malice.

I charge Mr. Erskine further with a pessimistic outlook that amounts to defeatism. France has already paid bitterly for a selfish and myopic leadership which accepted the cynical saw "*plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.*" In view of the phenomenal changes that have occurred in our own social and economic conceptions within the past few years, it is evident that humanity is still on the march. The English social system has had its grave faults: granted. The British aristocracy has often been insufferably arrogant, no doubt; but it has also done a magnificent job in building an Empire in which it is at least possible for men to be free, and it has had the good sense to adopt progressively the practical proposals of its more liberal opposition. If Mr. Erskine wants to know what the most conservative of Britons, the representatives of the Anglican Church, have to say about both the past and the future of Britain, let him study the debates of the leaders of the Church of England a year ago, as reported in *Time* for January 20, 1941. It might teach him a lesson in prophetic rather than splenetic thinking.

Mr. Erskine's reading of the American scene is on a par with his revelation of the English mind. He has made the extraordinary discovery that we Americans "have no ruling race" and that "the idea of race supremacy offends us profoundly." Perhaps we have not, most of us, fallen for the "Nordic" idiocy which has been the Nazi stock in trade, but let us not pharisaically thank God we are nobler than other men, as we contemplate our historic treatment of the Amerindians, and the painfully unsolved problem of our Caucasian attitude toward our Negro fellow-citizens. And then there is still the smug conviction of the typical Anglo-American that Dagoes, Chinks, Hunkies and Sheenies are beyond the pale.

Two facts stand out with startling distinctness since the perfidious attack on Pearl Harbor. First, that we need Britain as Britain needs us in the desperate task that confronts us both. Second, that there can be no hope of a decent international existence when the enemy is defeated, unless Britain and the United States stand together in making a real peace, instead of the uneasy armistice that followed the first World War. It cannot, of course, be a dictated peace policed by the "victors"; it must be a cooperative peace guaranteed by international justice and equal opportunity. I am sure responsible statesmen in Britain and the United States agree in that conviction. We should not make the huge task more difficult by fomenting misunderstanding and suspicion between the two peoples upon whom the heaviest burden of reconstruction must fall.

JOHN S. NOLLEN,
Grinnell, Iowa

A Larger Federal Citizenship

To the Editor:

I am sorry that our magazine saw fit to inaugurate its second decade of publication with such an unworthy leading article as John Erskine's "England and the English-Speaking People." It is obvious that the article was written before the declaration of war by the United States, and I imagine that the editorial board and Mr. Erskine himself might have hesitated to print it if they had realized what the immediate future held in store.

It is not, however, simply in the interest of what is too loosely and easily called "unity" that I am objecting to the article. I feel that the thinking involved was also too loose and easy, and that Mr. Erskine failed to inform himself fully and fairly about the situation which he was ridiculing with his internationally famous irony. It is not, as he maintains, the British who are reviving "the issue of the American Revolution," but he himself who is still fighting that Revolution and is unwilling to forget it in spite of all that has happened in the interim and especially in the last two or three decades. "The difference," says Mr. Erskine, "is between an old world and a new." He assumes it is quite obvious which is which and there is no possibility that England could ever become anything else than what she was in 1776. I have no space in such a letter as this to adduce detailed proofs that perhaps in many ways England is the new nation and the United States the old one, but to him and others who may be interested (or in need of education) I recommend two recent works, Gustav Stolper's "The Myth of Britain's Degeneracy" in *Harper's* for December 1941, and Allan Nevins' new book, *This Is England Today*. In both these discussions Mr. Erskine will find ample evidence to controvert his charges about English traditionalism, reaction and general thickheadedness. In many social reforms England has been years ahead of us in spite of all our "youth."

In the second place, since the article was clearly intended to be primarily an attack on the "Federal Unionists," I think it would not be too much to ask that Mr. Erskine read *both* of Clarence

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Streit's books carefully instead of basing his whole case on a distortion of the mere title of the second of them, *Union Now with Britain*. Federal Unionists have never suggested that "we scrap our past and rejoin the Empire." There has never been any question of whether Americans should apply for British citizenship or Britons for American citizenship. The so-called "Declaration of Interdependence" would call for a larger federal citizenship which would include not only the United States and the individual British nations but also *all* free nations which are willing and able to maintain the general principles of the Bill of Rights. Mr. Streit's first book named France, Switzerland, the Scandinavian countries, and various others in addition to the British commonwealths as the possible nucleus of a democratic federation which might eventually hope to embrace the whole world.

If Mr. Erskine approves his own statement, "The men of the (American) Revolution thought of society not as static but as constantly repeating the struggle upward from youth and poverty toward age and prosperity," he should support such a movement as Federal Union, which also conceives of society as evolving and which will not be statically content to return to the old racial, economic and political nationalism which is responsible for so many of the world's present woes. Writes Mr. Erskine, "Perhaps the chief characteristic of the United States is confidence that the ideal democracy will come from a union of all races." Exactly! But I and many others believe that the American is not the only person who can understand such an ideal and work to bring it into being; it does not have to be brought into being and cultivated on American soil alone. There are many British, French, Swedes, and even Russians and Chinese who are just as intelligent and broad-minded as we are. It is not the British but the John Erskines who are insular. America first, last, and in-between is, I hope, a dead issue.

ARTHUR H. NETHERCOT,
Department of English,
Northwestern University

Mr. Erskine Replies

To the Editor:

Thank you for the opportunity to see the comments on my article, "England and the English-Speaking People."

Mr. Streit's first book did indeed propose a union with other countries besides the British Empire and the United States, but the present proposal of "Union Now" is much narrower. I have received from "Union Now" printed explanations of its program since the Japanese attack on Hawaii. The units named as a foundation of the new order would include only the United Kingdom (England, Scotland and Wales), Eire, Canada, Australia, Union of South Africa, New Zealand and the United States. All other states (including Germany and Italy) "having once proved themselves competent to build and uphold true democracy within their borders, will automatically become welcome candidates for admission to the Union."

In other words, at the very moment when Russia, China and Holland are rendering essential aid and we are in a very realistic alliance with them, the proposal is to consider them eventually as candidates for admission to Anglo-Saxon society.

Not only Russia and China are omitted from the immediate "Union Now" program, but all the countries of Central and South America. If they prove themselves competent to build and uphold true democracy, they too will become welcome candidates for admission to the union!

My general point is that the English-speaking people are distinct from England, and their interests are not the same. We have been told that the crisis in the East must not divert our attention and our aid from the European front. A prompt reply came, not from us, but from another branch of the English-speaking people, Australia. John Curtin, Prime Minister of Australia, declared that Australia would refuse to be sacrificed to any European policy. "I make it clear," he wrote, "that Australia looks to America, free from any pangs about our traditional friendship with Britain."

This protest has been somewhat hushed up, but it was duly noted in the proper quarters. As I write these words on January 5, the morning paper announces that the Allies, under a British commander, will rush help to Singapore, and that the American forces in the Philippines will fight on. If I may be permitted the liberty, I shall indulge the hope that help will be rushed also to General MacArthur and his men, who went to this danger under their country's orders and with faith that we were behind them.

JOHN ERSKINE,
New York, N. Y.

Private Schools and Democracy

To the Editor:

I feel impelled to make some comments on Mr. Briggs's article, "The Non-Public School in a Democracy," which appeared in the Autumn

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issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, even though the space limits of a letter make such comment risky and difficult and make it necessary to exclude some items. In fairness to Mr. Briggs, I recognize too that there are definitions involved which have not been established as a basis for discussion. Briefly, Mr. Briggs's line of thought seems to me to be this: Because less than one fifth of the boys and girls in high school expect to go to college, the high schools attempt to give "boys and girls an increasing amount of history, civics, government, economics and sociology," which for the immature high school youth must be "weak tea," but "better than no tea at all." However, this works a hardship on the student who does go to college; so here is an opportunity for the non-public school, which, because of its freedom, can emphasize scholarship. Then, seemingly to offset any flavor of exclusiveness which may be associated with the non-public school, Mr Briggs claims for it "greater opportunities for learning to live with one's fellows than its great high school neighbor," and, recognizing "the boy of great ability . . . (who) cannot pay the fee the non-public school must charge," cautiously suggests that non-public schools be given subsidies by the public schools for such students.

The implications of the last suggestion alone lead me seriously to question Mr. Briggs's understanding of his subject, since I have no right to question his sincerity. In general the non-public school provides training for a select group at a cost of anywhere from 6 to 60 times as great per pupil as the public schools, depending on the location of the latter. Ideally democracy means equal opportunity for all. Practically this opportunity is affected, sometimes greatly, by cultural and economic circumstances and it can be proved that in some areas of living democracy is still a benign theory. The non-public school is in general associated with special privilege, and by its nature tends to perpetuate this privilege. This is not to pass judgment on the individuals or the schools *per se*, but to recognize with all its implications that "where your treasure is there will your heart be also."

Mr. Briggs's subject is "The Non-Public School in a Democracy" and it is understandable that he should try to fit the public school system into the non-public without suggesting the possibility that the non-public might be modified somewhat to the needs of democracy. I agree with him that those who go to college ought to be adequately prepared for the kind of colleges they go to, even though much could be said against the excessive and "undemocratic" pressure which colleges exert on all schooling below them. The whole tone of Mr. Briggs's article, however, leaves me with the feeling that in this discussion which involves "democracy" he accepts reluctantly the advisability of scaling the high schools somewhat in favor of the four fifths who don't go to college and who form the bulk of our population; and the article itself substantiates the point of view of this letter.

The recent eight-year study of the Progressive Education Association demonstrates that the work of students who have studied high school curricula not geared primarily to college requirements is not impaired; in fact in some areas it is improved in relation to the work of students coming from high schools where the emphasis is on preparation for college. Furthermore, is it not conceivable that "the serious work of the engineering school" might even be profitably tempered by a background of practical experience?

I agree with Mr. Briggs that "clannishness, cliques and an undesirable aristocracy based on worldly prosperity are not automatically eliminated in a public school." But since human nature is the same everywhere, is it not likely that the selective nature of non-public schools might work against the humility and sense of wise stewardship which the non-public schools must have if they are to serve democracy?

Even if Mr. Briggs's impractical suggestion of turning over to non-public schools the bright students from public schools could be effected, it would bring into sharper focus an already serious and basic problem in education, that is, the distinction between the so-called "bright" student and the security and power he symbolizes, and the "dull" student who is not for "books" and must "work" with his hands.

I have no ax to grind for the public schools; I went to one and know their limitations. But if non-public schools in general are to serve democracy they must, in proportion to their exclusiveness, be more sensitive to the mechanization, competition and insecurity of American life today. The more fortunate youngsters who go to non-public schools can and should be trained in wise stewardship of their heritage, but the odds are against their receiving this kind of training.

GLYN MORRIS,
Director, Pine Mountain Settlement School
(non-public school)

Non-Public Not Undemocratic

To the Editor:

I have read Mr. Morris' letter. I have no more sympathy with "the perpetuation of special privilege" than he has. But his assumption that, because

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an institution charges a tuition fee and tries to do a particular job well, it must inevitably perpetuate those unpleasant qualities associated with special privilege simply does not make sense. Such qualities do not originate in schools. They arise in the home, and it is the job of every good school to swat them—hard. I am inclined to think that the good non-public school is doing this quite as potently as the public school. I might say that, in many years of schoolmastering, I have found little to support the implication that poor boys are inevitably noble and worthy, and rich boys lazy, snobbish and arrogant. I've found both kinds in both groups, rather impartially distributed. That popular idea seems to me to spring in itself from a kind of class-consciousness as stifling to true democracy of heart in the poor as in the rich, and equally melancholy to contemplate in either.

With all disrespect due to the findings of the high priests of the Progressive Education Association (many of whom, by the way, are connected with non-public institutions), I simply do not believe that a boy who has not had a good solid grounding in mathematics (conventional, if you will), is as well qualified to undertake the work at, let us say, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, as the boy who has had that training. Indeed, he might not be admitted to that institution at all. Nor need it follow that the acquisition of what I have called "the tools necessary for a college education" precludes a wide range of interests. That idea seems to me to be the same old mildewed straw man.

If my information is correct,[1] Mr. Morris' institution is trying to do a rather valuable piece of work—and that institution charges a tuition fee. If he is anything like the rest of us in non-public school administration, he believes in his work and he is not finding it any too easy to secure the wherewithal to compensate his teachers adequately. I quite agree with him that my suggestion of a small subsidy to help impecunious pupils take advantage of what he has to offer—or what some of the rest of us have to offer—is naive and impractical. If, however, he believes that his institution can do something for young people which, at present, the public schools cannot do, he might find that even a very small subsidy would make it possible for someone to take advantage of what he has to offer—someone who otherwise could not come.

In rather wide acquaintance with schoolmasters, public and non-public, I have found the quality of humility in approach to "training for wise stewardship" quite universal. Incidentally, it is interesting to discover how very little of the education of the presidents of the United States has been obtained in public institutions. How good that education has been, and how wise the stewardship after the training, I shall not attempt to say. We all strive, I trust, toward "equality of opportunity." The important word here, I think, has to be opportunity, since if there is no opportunity, equality is of little use. We try to provide the opportunity, Mr. Morris and I, and all other sincere schoolmasters, and then we try to make it available to all who may benefit by it. We do all we can to increase that number. If I have it and my neighbor has not, we strive to get it for him too, rather than insist on neither of us having it simply because that would be "equality." Thus to strive is the great opportunity of every school. I don't look on democracy as a leveling-down process; if it is any good at all, it must be a leveling-up process—in education as well as in everything else worth-while.

I see no inconsistency in the juxtaposition of the words "non-public" and "democracy." Quite the contrary. I do not believe that a society in which institutions like Mr. Morris', my own, and the endowed universities were not permitted to exist would be a democracy at all. May I add that I wrote not to "defend" anything, but rather to emphasize an opportunity and an obligation. Both, of course, reach far beyond matters of scholarship into that supremely important matter of the training for stewardship which Mr. Morris has repeatedly emphasized. That training must come from the hearts of those who bear the responsibility. If the humble recognition of the magnitude of the responsibility is there, be the medium public or not, there is hope for the results.

JOHN DEQUEDVILLE BRIGGS,
Headmaster, St. Paul Academy,
St. Paul, Minnesota

[1] Sargent, *Private Schools* (1939-40), p. 769.

". . . Put Away Childish Things"

To the Editor:

For some months past I have been trying to put into sonnet form an idea of the difference between childhood and manhood that seems to be implied in the eleventh verse of First Corinthians, 13: "When I was a child I spake as a child, but when I became a man I put away childish things." I have just read in the Autumn AMERICAN SCHOLAR the article by Mr. Munitz, and there seems to be some similarity between his argument and the idea of my verse. So at least it seems to me now. I am taking the liberty of sending you the fourteen lines. Of course, I do not suppose that Mr. Munitz would accept these lines as an epitome of his article, but I think it sug-

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gests interesting comment, if not argument. A philosophy of art as creation is important, and should not be allowed to drop into the past without discussion and estimate.

Childhood and Manhood

In that first light of morning, when the world,
Thinking as any child, I understood,
For me the summer came, the clouds were furled,
Simple and finished, home and sky and wood.
What clear new thought for these, now put away,
When the grown man has done with childish things?
This, that creation is our task today
When every day a new tomorrow brings.
For we are tempted to submit to God,
To yield, because we do not understand;
Ourselves must smite the rock with magic rod,
Ourselves bring forth the world our hearts demand.
Of all wrong-doing, this the deepest wrong
That men have wandered purposeless too long.

W. W. Sleator,
Associate Professor of Physics and Curator of East Physics Building, University of Michigan

Purpose and Intelligence

To the Editor:

Mr. Sleator's lines state succinctly and most effectively the sort of ideas my article tried to express.

If I should be permitted to add a fifteenth line, as it were, it would contain an emphasis upon the importance of infusing purposefulness with intelligence. Otherwise the obvious criticism might be made that humanly purposeful creation, as some of the schemes for "new orders" we are confronted with today make evident, would simply replace childishness by barbarism. The *problem* is thus one not merely of transplanting the locus of creation, but of clarifying the ends and implementing the effectiveness of those means which would insure the realization of true manhood, one that is shaped in the image of a *rational* divinity.

Milton K. Munitz,
Department of Philosophy, College of the City of New York

CORRECTION: In the Winter 1941-42 issue of The American Scholar a typographical error occurred in Dr. George S. Stevenson's survey of psychiatry, page 40. The name of a new medical journal appeared as *Psychomatic Medicine*; it should have been *Psychosomatic Medicine.*

OUTSTANDING PUBLICATIONS ON THE AMERICAN COLLEGE

American Education and World Responsibility—The Proceedings of the Twenty-Eighth Annual Meeting, 1942. Addresses by Malcolm MacDonald, H. W. Prentis, Jr., George N. Shuster. Additional articles by Paul V. McNutt, Isaiah Bowman and Guy E. Snavely. Annual Reports, Minutes, Membership, Constitution. (*Bulletin,* March, 1942.) $1.50.

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About Our Authors

Double quotation marks usually indicate passages taken directly from autobiographical letters requested from the authors.

ALVIN JOHNSON, wise man and extraordinarily in touch with many facets of the world we live in, has for some years been a member of the Editorial Board of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR. He is Director of the New School for Social Research and of the Graduate Faculty of Political and Social Science (University in Exile). On February 14th the first French-speaking university in the United States—the *Ecole Libre des Hautes Etudes*—which he organized with the aid of French scholars, headed by Dr. Gustav Cohen of Yale, had its formal opening as an autonomous unit of the New School.

GOLO MANN, younger son of Thomas Mann, left Germany in 1933, a short time after his graduation from Heidelberg—too young, he says, "to have done anything worth while but too old to be able to forget my own language and culture. Since then I have lived in France, Czechoslovakia, Switzerland, the United States, as a foreigner—a situation I have found instructive but not easy. In France I taught at two universities; in Zürich I edited a semi-scholarly review, *Mass und Wert*, to which I contributed a good deal of philosophical and historical criticism. . . . I cannot but treat philosophy and history as one field, seeking in history the eternally recurring and similar as well as the unique and trying to understand the present through the past. My article is in a way a condensation of a book I have just completed on Napoleon's remarkable adversary, Frederick Gentz; unfortunately American publishers do not seem to share my interest in this man."

WILLIAM PEERY'S article on the Carolina Playmakers grows out of five years spent working with them. He acknowledges: "When seventeen I cracked the puritanical egg of my youth to spend a summer with a carnival. Literary ambition already having set in I became greatly infected; and the chronic condition, I'm afraid, has now passed into the acute stage." Mt. Holyoke now profits from his malady; he is assistant professor of English language and literature there and director of its Laboratory Theater. In his spare time he is editing the comedies of the Elizabethan actor-playwright, Nathan Field.

Had FREDERICK P. KEPPEL'S capacities been less diversified or had he been more reluctant to serve the public it would be easier to select from the long list of his interests the most relevant few. For eight years he was Dean of the College, Columbia University; for a year thereafter he was Third Assistant Secretary of War; from 1923 to late in 1941 he was President of the Carnegie Corporation; his books include such titles as *The Undergraduate and His College*, *Education for Adults* and *Philanthropy and Learning*. Though he abjures taking much credit therefor, it was largely under his administration that the Carnegie Corporation launched its program in aid of art activities.

DOUGLAS and ELIZABETH RIGBY'S article "is an offshoot of a more sizable tree—a book manuscript, now nearing completion, dealing with the why's and how's of collectors and the collecting habit. The whole thing started when Mr. Rigby, who is both a writer and painter, began pondering the motives and at times rather extraordinary decisions of art collectors." . . . Elizabeth Rigby for a number of years worked in the editorial department of a New York publishing house and was one of the assistant editors of *Doubleday's Encyclopedia* and of *Facts*. Douglas Rigby has held various newspaper jobs, has had work published in *Transition* and other experimental magazines, and for the past year has been teaching art at St. Bernard's School, N. Y. C.

CHARLES FRANKEL has been a member of the department of philosophy, Columbia University, since 1939. He recently wrote us that "I regard the business of philosophy as criticism and feel it no great burden that it should have a vaguely marked position somewhere between the sciences and literature; for I believe that philosophy may exercise its critical vocation both through analysis and through a circumspect imagination. I am surprised at the persistence of the love of System among those who call themselves 'naturalists' in philosophy and I think I can detect its presence as a suppressed canon among those who look for activities like religion or music to provide 'truth,' or among those who disparage such activities because they 'merely' provide occasions for worship or beauty. I suspect (or I hope) that the further development of naturalistic criticism will sweep such tendencies aside."

ARTHUR W. HUMMEL, Special Adviser to THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR on the Far East, lived in the Orient for fifteen years. Since 1927 he has been Chief of the Division of Orientalia,

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the Library of Congress. . . . A recent letter from him reads: "I count the thirteen years I lived in China and the two in Japan among the most eventful of my life. Throughout them I felt a new world was in the making and that many of the thoughts that we in the Far East were then thinking every American would have to reckon with in time. In view of the vast destruction of books that has taken place in China it gives me satisfaction to know that our National Library in Washington had the foresight to build up, over many years, a great Chinese collection—the largest outside of China and Japan. Over the course of the years since I left China I miss most the daily walks on the walls of that quaint old city in Shansi Province where I taught for ten years. Often I turn back in memory to the leisurely journeys by donkey or by mule cart to the great historic sites of that region and to the quiet mountain retreats where the temple 'having no light depends on the moon to light it, and having no lock depends on the clouds to seal it.' "

LEWELLYS F. BARKER, clinical professor of medicine and professor emeritus, Johns Hopkins, since 1914, writes: "I approached medicine by way of an apprenticeship in a drugstore where I learned much that was to be helpful to me in medicine later on. After graduating in medicine at the University of Toronto in 1890 I spent a year as intern in the Toronto General Hospital. Then, attracted by the excellent work done at the Johns Hopkins Hospital and especially by Dr. Osler, I came to Baltimore. For some nine years I lived in the hospital, working in medicine, pathology and anatomy under Drs. Osler, Welch and Mall. . . . In 1900 I was made professor of anatomy in the University of Chicago and in Rush Medical College, but in 1905 I returned to Baltimore as successor to Dr. Osler when he went to Oxford. After occupying the headship of the department for nine years I resigned to make way for a whole-time professor." . . . Dr. Barker has been honored by many schools of medicine, has served as president of various medical societies and has published half a dozen or more books but his chief pride is his affiliation, extending over nearly 50 years, with Johns Hopkins.

Those familiar with THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR over the past few years have realized that DELANCEY FERGUSON (professor of English at Western Reserve University and several-time contributor to these pages) possesses a fund of information on many subjects. He knows how to share most of his treasures with the reader but suffers from inhibitions when the subject is himself. He is particularly at home with Robert Burns, whose letters he has edited. Recently he has done much work on Mark Twain; his biography, *Mark Twain: A Literary Person*, is complete and awaiting publication.

ROSCOE POUND has enough work laid out to depress most persons but merely to keep him busy. This Dean Emeritus of the Harvard School of Law is preserved from idleness partly by the work he does in connection with the National Conference of Judicial Councils and partly by his obligations to Harvard as University Professor. He is not a member of any Faculty but is authorized to teach whatever he sees fit in any Faculty. He saw fit, last winter, to give a course in the Latin department on Lucretius and the Epicureans in Relation to Modern Thought. This year, he says, "I am giving the course on Lucretius again, my book on *Appellate Procedure in Civil Cases* has appeared and I have been delivering courses of lectures at different institutions (notably the Universities of Pittsburgh, Indiana and Notre Dame). Also I am to teach in the summer quarter here at the Law School this coming summer and give a short course in the Law School of The Ohio State University."

GEORGE BEISWANGER, assistant editor and dance critic of *Theatre Arts*, "sole surviving American and international magazine in the field . . . fled to editorial work after 11 years in chairs of philosophy. There is also something in being paid to watch Martha Graham dance." As a matter of fact he has written for the *Philosophical Review*, *Ethics* and the *Journal of Philosophy* . . . . "Playing the piano and organ had much to do with my interest in Wagner but what got me really started was the discovery that, despite its turgid rhetoric, Wagner's writing made sense. He always meant what he said but never said what he meant which delighted me since I understood that only professional philosophers could be that profound."

Since 1923 RUTH BENEDICT has been associate professor at Columbia University of the subject she stumbled across in 1919 and, likewise since 1923, editor of the *Journal of American Folklore*. Custom cannot, in her opinion, stale the infinite variety of this field; she published her book, *Patterns of Culture*, "to show how integrated cultural ways of life are and what different integrations are possible—an endless theme." . . . Three months ago she became a member of the Board of Editors of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR.

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